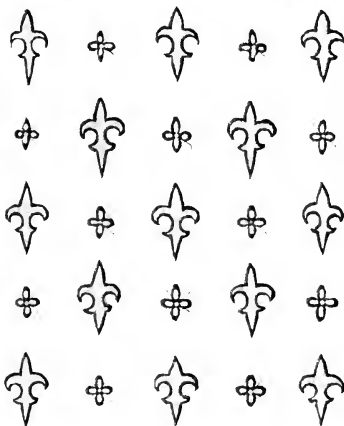


STORIES  
OF  
LIFE AND LOVE



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# Stories of Life and Love

BY

AMELIA E. BARR.



Joyful, or sorrowful life goes by,  
But the glory of life, is loving.

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## PREFACE.

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To My Many Dear Friends.

I have chosen to put among some of my own stories and poems a few of the very best short tales, of their kind, that I know in the English language. Variety is the spice of any entertainment, and I therefore ask leave to introduce some of my friends to the dear friends who have so long known and so kindly accepted my efforts to give them pleasure and profit.

Very sincerely,

AMELIA E. BARR.



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# STORIES OF LIFE AND LOVE.

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## THE PRICE SHE PAID.

BY AMELIA E. BARR.

Take but a single step astray  
And for the fault you have to pay.

### PART I.

Not many years ago the Rev. John Raeburn was the Independent minister of Market-Sorby. He was a man of unaffected piety and of great scholarship in certain directions; but fortune had served him with a niggard hand. For the congregation of Olivet Chapel was neither a rich nor a generous one, and Poverty had always been the familiar of the pious, studious, patient minister—that respectable poverty which hides itself beneath a garment and bears its suffering without a murmur. His wife had found in death a refuge from her ill fate ten years before my story begins; and his only son, after much contradictory folly and disobedience, had disappeared in that vague home of fortune-seekers—the Far West. Only his daughter Catherine remained to him, and she was beginning to realize their unhappy condition.

For Catherine Raeburn was a beauty, and a beauty without advantages of any kind is like a queen without a kingdom. It was not alone that her face was molded to perfection, her eyes divinely soft and bright, her complexion of the loveliest tints of youth and health: that her nut-brown hair was a crown to her, and that the exquisite undulations of her fine form made in her every movement a silent music—these things were only fleshly charms, and Catherine Raeburn possessed far nobler ones. She had a soul like a rose without a thorn; a nature pure and childlike; a frankness that thought no evil. Truth came naked from her lips. She was not assertive, but she had shown even in her childhood that her character was steadfast and self-reliant. And, above all, she had a joyous temper. She looked as if she had been born smiling.

Nothing of accidental fortune had been added to these natural advantages. She lived in a small, shabby house. She had no pretty clothing. And her education, as far as “accomplishments” went, had been entirely neglected. The minister had certainly made her acquainted with the master minds of English literature, with the history of nations and the lives of great men, and under his tuition she had become a clever mathematician. But of music and

singing, of painting and languages, of needlework, or of any of the trivial feminine arts of her day, she knew nothing at all. As she approached her eighteenth year she became conscious of these things, and perhaps she overrated her own disadvantages and deficiencies.

"I am in the world, but not of it," she said to her father one day, "and I cannot better myself here. We are so poor, and you know the chapel trustees are talking of your age and of getting a young minister. What can we do, father?"

"We can trust God, Catherine. He fail-eth not."

"But we do not belong to the race of prophets. We have no right to expect the ravens to wait upon us. Mrs. Lambert says she can get me a situation as governess, with forty pounds a year. They may retire you to-morrow, and forty pounds would at least give you a roof and a little bread and coffee. I should have to leave you, dear, but what else can we do?" and she stroked his white hair, and stooped to kiss the slow, cold tears of age from his cheeks.

It was a crucial moment; he had felt it coming for some time. His heart trembled and sank. If he had only then found the courage to say, "Let us remain together, Catherine," this story might have been a

very different one; might, indeed, never have been written at all. But he could not bear to tell her how unwise it was to take her destiny out of the hands of God into her own hands; and that in so doing she might tangle its threads, and gain sorrow and lose time. He was afraid she would think him selfish; and rather than be so misjudged, he would let her go. He did not realize how selfish his unselfishness was; for the touch of her hand on his head and her lips on his cheek had put him in that condition wherein even good men are led by feeling only; when conscience is not listened to, and reason not inquired of. And so when Catherine asked again: "Had I not better go away, dear," he drew her close to his heart, and answered:

"Go; and God go with you, Catherine."

---

A month after this conversation Catherine Raeburn was living at Otterby Manor House as governess to the little sons of James Mowbray of Otterby. The transition had been very pleasantly made. Mrs. Lambert, pleased with the success of her interference in Catherine's life, had done a mother's part to the inexperienced girl, in providing her with a suitable wardrobe, and in giving her advice and directions concerning the new circumstances which would surround her. In many other ways,

she had made the change not only possible but satisfactory; and so far Catherine's expectations had been amply fulfilled.

On an upper floor of the Manor House she was sitting at breakfast with Willie and Fred Mowbray. The pretty parlor, which formed part of the suite appropriated to the children and their governess, faced the sun-rising; and the lattices were open to the spring airs, from fell and garden. Flowery chintzes, lovely pictures, and a round table on which was spread a generous and well-served meal, gave to the room an air of charming comfort. Catherine was beautiful and happy. The boys were chattering merrily of their lessons and their rabbit hutches, when the door opened and Mr. and Mrs. Mowbray entered together. Mr. Mowbray had been from home since Catherine's arrival a week previously, and she glanced at him for a moment. He was a large man, with a fresh, open-air look, and he was dressed for riding; a good-natured man also, for he kissed the boys and asked after their rabbits and ferrets, and promised them each a pony. Then with his hand on his wife's shoulder, he stood watching the two women as they talked together. In five minutes more the interview was over, but Catherine was left with a letter in her hand, which Mr. Mowbray had given her. It was from her

father, and it was the first letter she had ever received. She went into her room to read it, and tears of tenderness came into her eyes, and she kissed the words so full of love and wisdom. To her they seemed to shine.

Only one new thing had happened in Market-Sorby; Lord Morpeth had been canvassing the place for the Tory government, and he had called on her father to secure his vote and influence. The minister seemed to have been much pleased with the nobleman; he thought him "a truly accomplished gentleman," and said they "had talked together on many subjects."

"Lord Morpeth?" said Catherine, softly. "I wonder who he may be." And all the day long the name haunted her, and set itself to her dreams and fancies, and would seem familiar, whether she faced it or put it away.

The promise of these early days was not belied by the future. It was the time of cherry blossoms when Catherine first came to Otterby, and many a pleasant week had passed since that time, giving no tremor or hint of the stormy life beyond. She lived with the two little lads. They studied, and they wandered in the woods and by the trout streams, where the clouds cast shadows and the willows dipped. On wet days

they read, and Catherine joyed in the story-books as much as any child, for she had never read any romance, and the wonder tales that filled the boys' library opened a new world to her. In July and August they almost lived out of doors; they were in the hayfields and the wheatfields, and as happy as the days were long, for no one interfered with their joy. Mr. and Mrs. Mowbray were at races and regattas, or they were off to Switzerland for a month, or else on board some great man's yacht, among the North Sea Islands.

With September, however, there was a change, for the shooting at Otterby, was famous, and many guests were coming. Rooms shut up all summer were opened, and dressed for company. An air of expectancy filled the house, and Catherine could not help catching the excitement. One afternoon she was going downstairs with a message for Mrs. Mowbray. Her arms were filled with dahlias, and she stepped carefully, but with an easy grace that was delightful to look at. Now, a little way from the foot of the stairs there was a broad landing, and as she reached it, a young man, who was running upstairs, reached it also. They both stood still. Their eyes met. Catherine's heart trembled within her. The stranger started; he was astonished at her beauty, and for a

moment was speechless. Something had happened to both of them. In another Catherine went forward, and he cried in an eager voice:

"Pardon! Stay! Have we met before? I am Almund Morpeth. Will you tell me your name?"

"I am Catherine Raeburn."

Then she smiled and stooped her head to the dahlias, as she passed him. And he thought she was an angel.

He went to his room and walked rapidly up and down. He had received a shock, a delightful shock. Every nerve tingled with a new-found joy.

"Catherine! Catherine! Catherine!" he whispered. "O, how sweet she is! How lovely! She is like sunshine. She is like music. It is heaven to stand and look at her."

Catherine was equally affected. She hastened to the drawing-room and sat down. A sweet, soft tumult filled her heart; involuntarily she clasped her hands above it, and the dahlias fell to the floor. Their scattered beauty recalled her to duty; she had been sent to place them in certain vases, and she compelled herself to do so. All the time she was wondering and speculating. Was he going to stay at Otterby? Would she see him again? Would she see him that night? When the family were alone, or there was only a familiar friend, it was cus-

tomary for the boys and their governess to dine with Mr. and Mrs. Mowbray; but when there were important visitors, or a large party, they were not included. Usually Catherine was pleased to be ignored; she enjoyed the solitude of her evenings, for when the boys were asleep she could write a long letter to her father, or make herself a new garment.

But this night she wished to be asked downstairs. She prepared the boys for such an event, and she considered her own dress with some anxiety. Shortly before the dinner hour, however, many carriages began to arrive, and she felt that her desire was hopeless. Never had she been so disappointed. The children's animal enjoyment of special dainties irritated her; their plans and interests, for the first time, were tiresome. She was glad when they said "Good night," and she could sit quiet and recall that most delicious interview. Nothing of it had escaped her. Morpeth's momentary look of amazement and admiration; his love-darting glance; his eager voice; his manner so eloquent with an uncontrollable impulse! Oh, there was so much said in that short passage on the stairway. No stranger had ever before been in a moment so familiar with her, and to her. Was he a stranger?

At this question a look of intense inquiry

came into her face. She drew her brows together, and sent Memory back, and back, through all her childhood. Shadows of pain and doubt followed the effort. She rose and went to the window and looked into the garden, flooded with moonshine. "It is the same scene," she whispered, in a soft, awe-struck voice, "and he is the lover that I have dreamed about ever since I was a little girl. Yonder is the twin-tree, and the hazel maze, and the sun dial. I have seen this place in my dreams many a time, and he was always there. Now that he has come, I remember the place. It is my fate. He will love me. I already love him. And if I had only stayed at home, I should have met him months ago. I have spent all the spring and summer here, teaching for a little money, and I have missed just so much of my life and love."

The moonlight faded, the company left, the fire died down, and then with soul on tiptoe, she went to sleep. In the morning the first words Willie said were: "Papa and Lord Morpeth have gone shooting;" and they were like cold water thrown on the whole day. But its routine had to be gone through, and part of it was an afternoon walk in the park. Here there was a great tree with a rustic seat round it, and she sat there while the boys made traps, and traced a mole's winding way. At sun-

set she rose and called them, and at the same moment Mr. Mowbray and Lord Morpeth appeared. Freddie took his father's hand, and Lord Morpeth walked with Willie and Catherine. As he came to her side, a wondrous beauty flashed into her face. If he had not already felt her charm he must have caught love from her there and then. For love radiated from her glowing cheeks, her starry eyes, her soft speech, her laugh like music, her little movements and expressions of unspeakable grace and living emotions. And he knew that he alone called forth all this loveliness. As a bee sips honey he drank it in. He was intoxicated with it. He caught her glances half way. He caught her speech on his smiles. The sway of her clothing made him languid with delicious feeling; the touch of her hand thrilled him like a new sense.

They were under the same roof, and for two hearts so enthralled, love found many sweet opportunities. That they were stolen ones, made them all the sweeter. Love enjoys the idea of contradictions. Love does not really want its course to run smooth. Catherine felt sure Mrs. Mowbray was vexed if Lord Morpeth paid her any attention. If he sat by her side, or took her for a walk, or made an excuse to go with Willie to the schoolroom, she took care to

interfere. Morpeth complained that his position was still harder. His uncle had chosen a wife for him, and he was determined to marry no one but Catherine. They made much of such hindrances to their meeting as really existed; they were quite disposed to imagine others that did not exist. They believed themselves to be more in love than any human creatures had ever before been. They took a certain joy in concluding that not only humanity, but destiny was disposed to cross their happiness. Morpeth did this consciously, for it put Catherine more and more under his influence; Catherine was sincere in her self-deception; she knew nothing of life, and was at this time as incapable of wisely guiding herself as she would have been of piloting a ship across the Atlantic.

Mr. Mowbray was the first to speak of the subject.

"Annie," he said to his wife one day, "Morpeth is staying here for the sake of Miss Raeburn. He cares nothing about the pheasants."

"I have thought that for some time, Thomas."

"If he wrongs her in any way I would as lief horsewhip him as not. It would be the same as wronging a child. She is as ignorant of life as our little Willie. Why don't you speak to her?"

"Because if I did, she would likely impute to me the meanest and most selfish reasons. Morpeth would teach her to do so. His interest would lead him that way."

"But if he loves her and wins her love, he must marry her. There is no reason against it."

"There is money against it, or rather poverty. His estate will be sold under the hammer if his uncle does not come to the rescue; and he will not do that, unless Almund marries Miss Muncaster."

"I fear it is a bad job. You had better send the little girl home."

"She suits me, and she suits the boys; but I will send her home at Christmas for two weeks. She will probably tell her father. It is his place to interfere."

"Morpeth is going to London with me to-morrow. You could speak to him to-night."

"It is none of our business, Thomas. And to people in love God himself could not speak wisdom. But it is near to Christmas, and I will send her to her father."

From this visit, however, Catherine received no strength. The struggling bareness and poverty of her home shocked her in every sense. She cried pitifully over her father in its sordid limitations, and was not consoled by the fact that he had sold an

historical text-book for one hundred pounds, and been requested to write more of the same kind. This had seemed a marvelous piece of fortune to the simple student, and he had kept it for a Christmas joy to Catherine; but the girl could not imagine riches from such a source. All her life she had seen her father writing, and nothing much had come of it. Yet she was glad to make his home more comfortable, and delighted to know that he was no longer dependent on the Chapel people for his daily bread.

This visit showed her how far she had wandered from her old self. The small, bare rooms, the plain table, the cramped, unlovely life of her girlhood, pained and shamed her. She felt that she could never return to it, and she longed also to put her father far from its constraints and humiliations. She had talked on this subject very often to her lover, and they had made many pleasant plans for the minister's future. But at present she could not discuss them; for Almund had particularly wished her to say nothing about him, just at this time. So she was often very quiet and silent, and the minister wondered where his joyous little girl had gone to. When he asked her, she said "she was thinking of his sad lot," and he was grateful and happy in her consideration. If she was really thinking of

her lover, her father did not suspect it. Not by carelessness, or mistake, is Love painted blind; it is Mercy that holds his eyes, so that he cannot see.

She returned to Otterby with a little heartache. Nothing at home had been quite as she expected. Her father had become absorbed in his new work, and had learned to bear life without her. Her old acquaintances had been politely cold, for Catherine had outgrown their patronage, and vulgarity does not love, unless its favors can humiliate. After all, it was pleasant to see Mrs. Mowbray smiling and nodding a welcome to her, as the train stopped at the station; pleasant to step into the handsome brougham and have the footman carefully fold the warm furs round her; very pleasant, indeed, to find her own parlor renovated and bright with flowers and firelight, the table delicately spread, and the boys waiting with open arms to greet her.

In a day or two, life settled back into its usual routine, and then the Mowbrays went to London for a short season. Catherine was left with plenary powers in her own department, and she was happy in the prospect of a few weeks of quiet independence. Every morning brought her a long passionate letter from her lover, and all her leisure was spent in answering these letters,

and in tender, languorous dreaming of the man who had taken possession not only of her feelings but of her imagination.

About the beginning of February there was a tone of trouble in Almund's correspondence. "His uncle was seriously ill. He feared he would have to go to the south of France with him. He had heard also that the Mowbrays would bring back with them many guests, and a certain Captain Forrester was to be one of them, and he was already furiously jealous of him." Catherine smiled, and yet she was pleased with this exacting affection. What woman does not like her lover to be a little jealous of her?

Suddenly, one afternoon, Almund arrived at Otterby. Catherine was out with the boys, but he could guess where they were likely to be found, and went straight to the park pond. Very soon the voices of the three happy skaters convinced him that he had been a correct diviner. Catherine was flying over the ice, the boys vainly trying to catch her ere she reached the goal, and in their eager chase Almund's approach was not perceived, until they turned and saw him standing on the edge of the pond. Then it was who could reach him first, and there was a little hubbub of joy over his arrival.

Never had Catherine seemed so exqui-

site and so desirable. If any pitying scruples had been in his heart ere he saw her, the splendor of her beauty and his own overmastering passion for the girl silenced all doubts and made him reckless as to consequences. As they walked home through the winter twilight, he told her what urgent case had brought him to Otterby.

"My uncle leaves in two days for the Mediterranean," he said, "and I must go with him. It is not likely he will ever return alive. It is true I am his natural heir, but he is enormously rich, and his personal property he can leave as he desires. It is most important to me, Catherine. Without it, my title will be but a killing burden. I cannot leave you with nothing but a promise between us. There must be an irrevocable tie. You must marry me to-morrow morning."

"I cannot do that. I must stay here until Mrs. Mowbray returns. She expects nothing less from me."

"I do not wish you to leave her just yet, I only wish you to marry me. No one but the priest and two witnesses will be present. I have arranged everything. Then, when my poor uncle is no more, I shall return home free and rich, and we shall have a public ceremony. I ask nothing from you but this. We will part at the

church door, and I will not see you again till I can claim you before all the world."

She only answered with a sigh, and he continued his pleading until the house was reached. Then he turned to Willie and said:

"Ask me to tea with Miss Raeburn and you, boys. I think you might do that."

And Willie and Fred jumped at such a delightful proposal, and very soon the footman was spreading the table in the children's parlor, and Catherine was pouring out the tea, and Lord Morpeth serving the game pasty. A delightful hour followed the meal, and then the boys, wearied with skating and talking, fell sound asleep; and Lord Morpeth had his opportunity. All the sweet ways of persuasion known to men, his love—strong and exacting—taught him; and when he left the Manor House at nine o'clock that night, it was with Catherine's promise to meet him at nine o'clock the next morning in the parish Church at Otterby. The rector was in Italy, and the curate lived at the larger village of Otterby-Major; but Almund had a clergyman with him, a friend of his college days, and a shilling would obtain the keys from the sexton.

The promise was made, and she was too truthful to waver a moment after it; but she did not dare to think of what might fol-

low. She was going to make Almund happy, going to give him an unmistakable proof that she desired none but him, and that she fully trusted her future to his honor. Women who really love rejoice in such self-sacrifice, and Catherine went to sleep smiling. She was glad to show her love by doing all that love asked; she would trust Almund without guarantee; her faith in him needed no witness.

Nine o'clock was an early hour at Otterby Manor. When she left the house, half an hour before it, only a servant-maid was about. "I am going for a walk, Ann," she said, "but I shall be back before breakfast is served." It was a clear, cold morning, and she walked rapidly, neither debating with herself nor spoiling the grace of her surrender with questions and suspicions. Almund met her at the stile where the park touched the highway, and as soon as they entered the church a young man in the usual clerical dress stepped from before the chancel railing. Two others walked forward, and after a few sentences which Catherine scarcely heard, and certainly did not recognize, Almund clasped her hand, and took her for his wife "until death should part them." A ring was slipped on her finger, and in an ecstasy of emotion she heard Almund call her "wife." Then there was a slight movement, a few words in a

low tone, and she was conscious that Almund was paying the priest money and giving directions to one of his witnesses, who was his valet. The next minute they were in the sunlight again, and Almund was holding her hand close, and saying softly to her every word a woman loves to listen to.

So soon to part! That was the shadow of the happy hour; but Catherine would not be sorrowful. She bid Almund "good-bye" with radiant smiles, and went back to her duties at Otterby, whispering his name to her heart all the way home. Only an hour had passed, and yet in that hour she had done what she could never undo; she had stepped across a Rubicon, and now there was a great gulf between the Catherine of yesterday and to-day. She felt it immediately. The boys' lessons were things far off, she could not bring them within her interests. She had left something of her old self in that old church, and the words spoken over Almund's and her own clasped hands had been transforming ones. It is however, a fortunate thing when women deeply in love have duties that must be done; and Catherine being conscientious in the smallest matter, soon compelled herself to affect the interest she did not feel. And the inevitable is a great strengthener. In a day or two she realized that Almund

was far from her; that no actual change in her life could take place for some weeks or months, and that she must either remain at Otterby or go back to her father's house.

So the winter went, and with the spring the Mowbrays returned to the Manor House. But though nothing like a complaint was expressed, Catherine was soon sensitive to a difference. She did not consider that the "difference" had first arisen with herself; that her pupils had long felt it, though they were quite unable to define the change. She only wondered what the servants had said to Mrs. Mowbray, or what Mrs. Mowbray had heard in London; and day by day the slight coldness and constraint increased. Before her marriage Catherine would have tried to smile or explain it away; now, she simply did her duty, and waited. When Almund came home, her position would be altered.

One morning Mrs. Mowbray was a little unreasonable. She said "she did not know what had so changed Catherine," and yet when asked, she could not define the change. Catherine felt injured, and was silent and irresponsive. A few words would have cleared the domestic atmosphere, but they were not said; and the boys played in whispers and did not enjoy their play. By the afternoon mail Catherine received a letter from Almund. He said "he

had just come from his uncle's funeral. He was ill. He wanted his wife. He begged Catherine to come to him. But she must let Mrs. Mowbray think she was going back to Market-Sorby; he did not want her meddling in their affairs."

The letter was an impetuous, passionate appeal, and it found Catherine in the very mood to answer it. She sought Mrs. Mowbray, and said she wished to go home.

"It will be the best place for you," answered the lady. "You are unhappy, and you do not tell me why. I have heard things that may or may not be true. You do not confide in me. I think you ought to speak to your father."

As it happened, Market-Sorby was on the direct road to London, and Mrs. Mowbray, hearing Catherine ask for a ticket for that place, was convinced she had returned to her home. She was sorry, and she was not sorry. Catherine's beauty was too remarkable. She was not jealous, but she did not like to hear Mr. Mowbray rave about it; and the boys were really silly where their governess was concerned. Yes, it was better to have a change, and she very willingly forgot all about Catherine Raeburn's existence.

## PART II.

Joyful or sorrowful days go by, but for many months after joining her husband, Catherine was a very happy woman. They traveled east and west, and added to their own individual pleasure the glory of southern sunshine, the romance of the past and the luxury of the present. In these days Catherine wrote constantly to her father; and the minister, shut in his lonely study, was charmed and refreshed by her delightful letters. He thought she was traveling with the Mowbrays, and duly sent little messages of gratitude to them. Catherine never undeceived him, and there came a day when she was glad he had been so innocently deluded.

It was quite two years before any shadow darkened her life. She was then in Rome, and her little daughter, Ada, fretful and not well. The child had much beauty and intelligence, and had attached herself with singular affection to her father. This affection was fully returned, though it seemed to him an unnecessary care to remain constantly at Ada's side. Catherine, however, was averse to leaving her, and thus it happened Almund went out very generally alone. One day he met an English family whose residence was very near his own seat in Yorkshire, and a close

intimacy sprang up between them. He mentioned the meeting casually to Catherine, but he did not tell her how frequently he was at their apartments, nor yet how constantly he was Miss Allerton's companion. Catherine was only aware of an increasing loneliness, and of a vague estrangement, which she could neither check nor yet understand.

On a certain afternoon Almund promised to drive with his wife and child. The carriage arrived at the appointed time, but he did not come, and Catherine went with her daughter alone. She was unusually depressed, a sense of calamity was in her heart, and the very uncertainty of her alarm added to her ominous dejection. Suddenly her portensions became substantial and palpable. She saw a lover-like couple riding before her. The man was her husband; the woman, who was superbly mounted, was unknown to her. She went home with a heart heavy as lead. She had longed to find out the cause of Almund's growing coldness, and it had been shown her. What should she do? Her first impulse was to tax him with his unfaithfulness. Her second was wiser. She did not know that he had been unfaithful. Why suppose it? It would be better to take him away. She called forth all her beauty to meet him. She gave him only smiling af-

fection. She made no inquiries, evinced no suspicions, but, in a favorable moment, spoke of Ada's continued fever, and said the doctor advised a change of climate.

She was delighted when Almund proposed to return to England, for this movement implied a great deal more than a mere return. He had always declared he would then publicly ratify their marriage. "It had been impossible," he said, "to do this in foreign countries;" and she fully believed him. But in England she must take her place. Her husband's proposal, therefore, implied his realization of her right and his intention to give her it. With a light heart, she prepared for the journey, but all the way homeward Almund was irritable and uncaring of her comfort, and when they arrived in London, instead of taking her to his own seat or to some fashionable hotel, he complained of poverty, and rented rooms in a private house in Baker street. Every day the tie which had pressed so lightly in foreign countries, where he was unknown, grew more and more galling when among familiar faces and conditions. He began to stay very constantly at his club, and this change greatly troubled Catherine. She could not reconcile it with the public acknowledgment of their relationship.

In a few weeks her position became al-

most unbearable, yet she constantly said to herself: "Patience! Patience! It must be disagreeable for Almund to acknowledge a marriage three years old. I must let him do it when and how it seems easiest to him. But, for Ada's sake, it must be done. For myself, I should be a coward; but for Ada, I shall insist."

One morning she received a letter from her father in answer to one informing him of her return to her native country, and promising him a visit at Christmas. The letter was but a few lines, but it filled her with sorrowful remorse. "I am dying," he wrote. "God has been good to send you back. Come and let me bless you before I go the way no man returns." She wept bitterly over the pathetic entreaty, sent a messenger for her husband, and then went out to buy a warm garment for traveling. As she was walking through a store on Regent street, Mrs. Mowbray entered. Catherine called her in eager recognition, and advanced with both hands outstretched. The lady looked at her scornfully and passed on.

Burning with the shame of this indignity, Catherine went quickly back to her rooms. The servants were in an inner one, and she heard what they said. Their words tore the last vail from her eyes, and when Almund arrived she temporized with the situ-

ation no longer. "My father is dying," she said. "I must go to him at once. Shall I take Ada with me?"

"No!" he answered quickly. "You would say the child was mine, and the opinion of Market-Sorby may be important to me, in a political sense."

"The child being yours, why should I not say so?"

"If those boors took it into their heads I had wronged you, or her, it might do me an injury."

"But you have not wronged us—you do not intend to wrong us. I am sure you will acknowledge our rights, the moment you think it proper to do so. And, indeed, it ought to be done at once. This afternoon Mrs. Mowbray refused to speak to me, and when I came home, unexpectedly, I heard the servants talking in the next room. Almund, they spoke wickedly of me; and they pitied Ada, because she was a girl child, and her misfortune was so much harder on a girl than a boy."

"The impertinent creatures! Send them away this very night."

"Call me your wife before them. How soon will you do it before the world?"

"Catherine, there is no use in deceiving you further. You are not my wife. I have found out that Frank Mason, who performed the ceremony, was not in orders.

He told me a lie, for the sake of the big fee I promised him."

She was white as death, but quite calm.

"We can be married again, love," she said, almost in a whisper.

He answered, gloomily:

"I do not wish it."

"And our pretty Ada is then—what they called her?"

"Right or wrong, Ada is my child."

"And I? What am I?"

"Now, Catherine, there is no use in making a scene. We have been very happy, let us part before we hate each other. Go and see your father. When you return we will consider things, and talk this matter calmly over."

"I shall take Ada with me."

"You will not. You will remember that the child is mine. The law gives her absolutely to me, if I wish it so. In order to retain Ada you will have to treat me with consideration." Catherine sank into a chair and covered her face with her hands, and he stooped and kissed her hands and then left the room.

The vague unrest and doubt of months had come in an hour to revelation. She did hope, he did not weep, and she did not trouble her false husband with either message or letter. She called the nurse, explained her intended journey, and prom-

ised the girl a gift of ten pounds if she was careful of and kind to the child during her absence. It seemed as if she left her life in the wet kisses she pressed on the sleeping little one, then she stepped into a cab, and went away in the rain and darkness to her father's deathbed.

He was almost at the last gasp.

"I have been waiting for you, Catherine," he said, and he drew her close, and blessed her, and so went praying into the presence of God.

She shut his eyes, and sealed his lips with kisses, and was glad that he had suffered enough. His sorrows were over; hers were but beginning. He had left her nearly £300, and when she thought how he must have worked and denied himself for this end, she wept abundantly; her anguish found a voice; she knelt by her father's chair, and poured out all her complaint and was comforted and strengthened. This money, and a recent letter from her brother in America, were all she brought with her from Market-Sorby. There was little for her to do. Mr. Raeburn had known he was dying, and had destroyed his papers, and disposed of his books; so that on the evening of the fourth day she was back again in London.

She hastened to the house in Baker

street, and her impetuous ring, very quickly brought a servant to the door.

"Good evening, George," she said, and without waiting for an answer, she flew upstairs. Her room was in perfect order, a fire on the hearth, the gas lit and shaded, but there was no sign of her child. She ran from room to room. She frantically called the nurse. She pulled open the child's wardrobe, and found it empty. Then she fled downstairs to the landlady's parlor.

"Mrs. Dale!" she cried, "where is Ada?"

"Sit down, ma'am, and I'll tell you all about it."

"I cannot sit. Where is my child?"

"Quite safe, ma'am. The gentleman, her father, took her away. There is a letter for you on the table."

Catherine turned without a word and went upstairs slowly and uncertainly, like a creature stupid with a blow. The letter met her eyes as she entered the room, but for some time she did not touch it. What could it tell her that she did not know? How could there be any comfort in it for her lost honor, her lost husband, her lost child? When she compelled herself to read its contents, she found them just such as breaks the bruised reed.

"MY DEAR CATHERINE," wrote Almund, "I have taken Ada away, because it is best,

both for you and the child. We can no longer remain together, for I cannot make you happy. But I shall never forget how happy we have been, or that your love has sweetened three years of my life. You need have no care for Ada; but try and remember me as kindly as I do you. I have placed five hundred pounds to your credit at Coutts's, and come to me as your friend in any trouble you may have. Only I will have no meddling with my daughter.

“ALMUND MORPETH.”

It was a cruel letter even in its pretended kindness. She could only bear a sentence at a time, and every sentence was like a stone flung at her affections and self-respect. Yet, in spite of all, she wept passionately over her slain love and her faithless lover. All through the long night she could realize nothing but that he had left her forever. As morning dawned, she fell asleep and lay senseless and dreamless until the noon hour. In the moment of waking she endured it all over again. But the necessity for action was imperative, and she went at once to a lawyer.

She knew him only as a Mr. Nugent, the son of an Independent minister who had once been associated with her father, but he proved to be the very friend she needed. He heard her whole story without

blame, for he understood why and how she had been so easily deceived in her marriage. She had never seen an Episcopal wedding, and she had often seen the simple rite of her father's church—a few words of exhortation and promise and the gift of a ring. For the same reason the lack of priestly vestments did not strike her. Her father had worn none. And when Mr. Nugent asked if no certificate had been signed, she answered:

"Certainly. There was a paper about our marriage, which Lord Morpeth, the priest, the witnesses and I myself signed. Lord Morpeth put it in his pocket, and I have not thought of it since."

No! She had trusted everything to Love, and Love had forsworn her.

Her friend was very honest. He pointed out the complete weakness of her case. She might, indeed, punish Lord Morpeth for his baseness. She might make him pay her money. He did not think she had other redress. And as for the child, it was likely any court would consider its welfare best assured by the care of the father. To move in the matter would be to gain notoriety, and nothing else; yet as Lord Morpeth would be much annoyed by such notoriety, she might in this way punish him if she so wished. But Catherine did not wish to

punish him. She still loved him, and his shame could not heal her shame.

"It is my child I want," she answered. "I want to see her. I want to be near her; to be sure that she is cared for and kindly treated."

"If the little girl has been taken to Morpeth Court, I can find that out," answered Mr. Nugent. "And if you will be content with watching over your child and not over-particular as to opportunities, I can arrange that much favor for you. You shall hear from me in a week, perhaps less."

In three days she was summoned to Mr. Nugent's office.

"Your daughter," he said, "is now living at Morpeth Court. Her father left the place yesterday. I have obtained a position for you in the house as seamstress. You must disguise yourself as well as you can."

"The nurse may see and recognize me."

"No one connected with the child's old life is near her. She is thought to be a ward of Lord Morpeth's."

"My little girl will know me."

"I think you need not come in contact with her. But you must arrange for that contingency yourself. This letter will introduce you to the housekeeper, Mrs. Stead. It is the best I can do."

"You have done well for me. I am most

grateful for your kindness. I have settled all my affairs, and am ready to leave by any train."

"Then go at once," he answered, "and do not lose heart. There is One greater than law, and He can bring right out of wrong."

Early the next morning she was at Morpeth Court, and an hour later she had presented her credentials, and gone to the room assigned her.

"A strange and sad-looking woman," thought Mrs. Stead; "so young, so pretty, and yet her hair is white as snow. All in black, too! I'll warrant she has seen trouble of some kind."

Strange and sad, indeed, were the circumstances that had brought Catherine as a servant to the splendid home which ought to have welcomed her as a mistress. Her place was in the linen-room, an apartment at one end of a long corridor, the nursery being at the other end. Here she sat sewing day after day, comforted at intervals by the sound of Ada's voice or the patter of her feet on the polished gallery or the sight of her going for or returning from her daily drive. Eagerly she watched and listened for these tokens of her child's welfare, and carefully she scanned the face of the nurse, a young girl, who at least appeared to be kind to her charge. As the winter passed onward, the familiarity of

daily intercourse brought her other favors. She grew friendly with the nurse, and easily obtained permission to sit by the sleeping child while the girl passed her evenings among her companions in the servants' hall or at dances given by the neighboring farmers or by the servants of some of the large houses adjoining.

"I like to sit alone," said Catherine, in explanation. "I have had troubles. I have no heart for mirth, and I should only spoil your pleasure."

And the servants thought her very civil and good-natured, and pitied and petted her. Only once during these sweet watches did the child awaken, and then Catherine lifted her to her breast and soothed and kissed her, and was sorrowful to tears when the little one asked:

"Are you my own mamma?" In the morning she said to her nurse. "My mamma came to see me last night," and the servants thought she had dreamed a dream, and wondered what was the meaning of it.

Several times during the winter Lord Morpeth visited his home, and Catherine learned in various ways that Ada was much petted by him. She saw him also very often during these visits, and was obliged to admit to herself that he looked like a man thoroughly happy. No memory of her ruined life appeared to trouble him; and yet

this opinion was hardly correct. He was often sad for the past; and he never saw Ada flitting about the rooms that he did not remember Catherine with a regret, that was near akin to longing. But he had become infatuated with Miss Allerton in Rome, and there were many things which would make a marriage with her a potential advantage to him. Her family had great political influence, and she had both beauty and wealth. She was also in love with him, and he was flattered by her preference.

In the spring it was commonly rumored that he was engaged to her. Catherine heard the news as she sat at table, and her heart became suddenly still, as if something had died there; but it was not long ere a strange, fierce feeling took possession of her. She had become jealous—jealous of the love that was hers of right, and jealous for the future of her child. If Almund married this woman what would become of Ada? She might be neglected; she might be cruelly used; she might be sent away to some hard, loveless school. There would be other children and Ada would become an eye-sore, a reminder of what must be forgotten. At all risks, she felt she ought to protect her child.

During the ensuing weeks she endured a crucifixion of every womanly hope and desire. Her suffering often made her reck-

less and imprudent; indeed, it was a mere matter of personal vanity that prevented her several times from confronting the two beings who had wrecked her life. When she saw them walking through the garden with loverlike steps and attitudes, she had more than once flung away her sewing and resolved to make them suffer with her. But could she? She was not even sure that she wished Almund to suffer, and she was sure that her white, false hair and plain, coarse clothing would lay her open to ridicule; and if she threw off her disguise, then the short, fluffy, brown curls beneath it gave to her face a piquant, childlike expression totally at variance with the tragedy she was living. Thus a moment's reflection always made her resolve never to give her false love and her hated rival such an opportunity of turning her into contempt and laughter.

In September the wedding was definitely fixed, and Almund was constantly at the Court, superintending its renovation. Catherine then felt her position no longer either safe or endurable, and she resolved to put an end to it as soon as possible. She went into the village and bought some coarse stuff and made Ada a dress and hood of it. Her money she had always kept about her person, and her brother's address in New York City was firmly engraved on her

memory. She now only waited for an opportunity to leave Morpeth, and it soon came. One fine, warm evening, the nurse said she wanted to go to the Harvest Home at Farmer Gates's; there was to be a dance and a supper after it; and Catherine answered:

"Why not go, then? You know that I am always willing to take your place. I like nothing better than to sit in the nursery for a few quiet hours. And if you are having a good time, stay it out. I will go to bed beside Miss Ada."

The girl readily accepted the offer, and about eight o'clock Catherine felt free to move, for Mrs. Stead had a card party in her room, and she was the only person likely to visit the upper part of the house. Before the hour Catherine had given Ada a few drops of opium, and as soon as its influence was apparent she lifted the child, dressed it in the garments she had prepared, took off her white, false hair, threw round her a common-looking plaid shawl, and lifting Ada in her arms, went rapidly across the fields to the railway station. She knew there was a train to London at nine o'clock, and she arrived at the depot just in time to take a ticket for Market-Sorby.

But she had no intention of getting off at Market-Sorby, though she left her next move to the first favoring circumstance.

She found it not more than twenty miles from Morpeth, at Galston Village. There had been a fair at this place, and a great crowd was at the small wayside station. She slipped out of the train, and passing through it, went into the ladies' waiting-room. Here she stayed until the night express for Glasgow arrived, and on it she went northward. When she reached Glasgow it was early morning and she knew that the child was missed. So she hastened to the Broomielaw, where she saw a steamer just ready to sail for Belfast. In half an hour she was on her way to Ireland, and the child was cheerfully taking its breakfast at her knee. Once in Ireland she made her way as rapidly as possible to Moville, and was fortunately in time for the Anchor Line steamer *Circassia*.

On the Atlantic she realized her position. Hitherto she had been like a person in a dream, moving with the same unconsciousness and celerity; and also with the same assurance and success. But sitting through the long days, she had time to consider her situation. Possibly Almund suspected her, and if so, he might cable the police in New York to watch for her arrival—but this was not at all likely. He did not know of her brother's existence, or if in some previous confidence she had named him, it was as a wandering black sheep; poor, and, perhaps,

not reputable. Her knowledge of his newly acquired wealth, had only come to her with her father's death. She had had no conversation with Almund after it. From what she knew of her husband, he was more likely to look for the child in some of the little European towns, where they had been so happy together; and where life was secluded and economical to the last point.

However, if he had suspected her course, and had taken means to arrest it, her brother was in New York. She would appeal to him. He was rich, he would defend her claim, and she had also a conviction that the law of that new, free country, would not under the circumstances, take her child from her. If it was necessary she would tell all to save it. Surely she had paid dearly enough for the little one!

As the days wore on and they neared land she gathered strength with every hour. Her courage rose, she put doubt and fear beneath her feet and walked off the gangway, looking unflinchingly into all the faces she met. No one attempted to stay her, and she stepped into a cab and drove to a hotel, which she had heard recommended on the ship. She did not send for her brother at once; she knew too well the value of beauty adorned, and though she had bought some clothing at Belfast, it was not suitable for the importance of the first

impression she wished to make. In a couple of days, however, Ada was radiant in white embroideries and pink ribbons, and Catherine gravely handsome in that soft, rich black silk which fits all occasions. Then a messenger was dispatched with a note for Mr. Thomas Raeburn, and Catherine anxiously awaited the result.

Before she had begun to expect the answer her brother came himself with it. She heard his voice on the stairway, and knew it; and when he entered the room she saw a younger likeness of her father. It was a meeting of every desire. Catherine could not have gone anywhere in the world and been so heartily welcome. Mr. Raeburn's wife had died a few months previously, and his fine house had been at the mercy of brutally thievish servants ever since.

"I was just thinking of selling all they have left me to sell," he said. You are a very godsend to me, Catherine. Come home, my dear ones, at once!"

"Come home!" These two words covered the life of the next three years. Catherine and Ada really went "home." All that great love and great wealth could give they had. Catherine ruled her brother's house with a firm and gracious hand, and Ada was his pet and pride; while both accepted their pleasant life and lot with a happy cheerfulness which made a perpet-

ual sunshine. As far as it was possible, Catherine strove to forget the past. In the earliest hours of their meeting she had told her brother all her sad story; and in order to satisfy her natural anxiety, he had procured, through Brentano, files of English papers covering the period of her flight. From these she learned that Lord Morpeth had at first been prostrated by the loss of his ward, and that subsequently he had not only employed the best detectives, but also closed his house, put off his marriage, and gone himself in search of the abducted child. The papers named, with a tone of surprise, Bulgaria as his first point. But Catherine understood why he had gone first to Bulgaria; and this understanding included the less obvious one that he believed she had been the abductor, or else, why Bulgaria? And if he divined so far, he would also comprehend that she had been in his house for months, and had seen and understood his relationship to Miss Allerton.

She gave him a year to go over the ground they had traveled together, and then, perhaps, he would come to America. But three years passed in serene content, and there was no sign which indicated that her asylum had been discovered. Catherine grew young again, more nobly beautiful, more self-composed, graceful and gra-

cious. And Ada—who was now a charming little girl six years old—was beginning to rule her uncle with an absolute but loving authority. If Catherine had any longing or heartache from the past, she carefully kept it out of the present, and not one of her friends suspected the tragedy she had lived through. As she bore the name of Mrs. Almund, she was believed to be a widow, and society knows well that the loss of a husband is not always a calamity, so no one inquired into particulars that did not concern them. In the summer Mrs. Almund's house parties at her brother's Newport residence were delightful enough to quiet curiosity, and in winter her dinners and dances made the Raeburn home on Madison Avenue a resort to which many looked happily forward.

Thus the time went by, until more than three years had passed, and it was again drawing near to Christmas. One bright, frosty morning Mr. Raeburn, Catherine and Ada went out together. They were in an open carriage, wrapped in rich furs, and were going down the avenue at a rapid pace. Catherine was talking eagerly, her face bright with pleasure and rosy with health and fine spirits. Suddenly, in the midst of a sentence, she paused, turned deathly pale, and, laying her hand on her brother's arm, said a few words in a whis-

per. "Are you sick, Catherine?" he asked tenderly.

"It is Almund! I know it is! Oh, Tom, what shall I do?"

"Nothing," he answered fiercely. "Let him but speak to you, and I will kill him."

"No, no, Tom; take me home. I want to think. I want to be alone."

"You are mistaken, I dare say. He has forgotten by this time."

"It was Almund. Nothing could deceive me."

Yes, it was Almund. But Catherine's astonishment was not greater than his own. He had only been in America two days, and had not even begun the search, which was now the passion of his life. Standing at the hotel door, he was considering his first movements, when the approaching carriage attracted his attention, because of its fine horses. In a moment its occupants were in sight, and then Almund gasped in joy and amazement. "Catherine and Ada!" He had not a doubt. But the man! Who was he? A fierce jealousy filled him with a new rage. What right had that man with his wife and child! He felt as if he must slay him, then and there. Rapid as his recognition and emotions had been, the carriage had passed out of sight, ere he was able to move. He rushed to the desk and described the vehicle and its occupants,

but the clerks looked up with a blank annoyance, and could tell him nothing. Carriages passed constantly; how should they know one from another?

Day after day he watched and waited, and inquired, and searched. Every noted store was haunted, every opera and theatre visited; and at this time he learned something of what Catherine had suffered in Rome, and afterwards at Morpeth, when he ignorantly paraded himself through the summer days with Miss Allerton. That glimpse of Catherine smiling and talking with her brother, and of the lovely Ada at her side, had revived all, and more than his old passionate love. He told himself "there was no woman in all the world like her!" He could neither eat nor sleep nor yet rest; one idea and one hope possessed him—the idea of his lost wife and child, and the hope of regaining their love and society.

But though Catherine did not consciously evade him, they never met. In the social set to which Morpeth had introductions, Catherine was not known. No one visited a Mrs. Raeburn or a Mrs. Morpeth, which were the only names he could imagine her taking; though, if he had heard of a Mrs. Almund, he would instantly have arrived at a proper conclusion. Not, however, until Christmas was long

over, did he hear the word. Then one evening, suddenly, as he was talking to a lady in an opera box, he heard her companion say: "There is Mrs. Almund! How lovely she is to-night!" The next moment he was feasting his eyes and heart on her beauty. Never had he dreamed of such a Catherine. His life was at her very feet. She must love him again, or he must die for her sake. Scarcely could he control himself sufficiently to ask the questions that were all in all to him.

Through the night he walked the floor in a tumult of thought.

"She loved me once! Oh, how she loved me! She cannot have forgotten! I will go to her!"

Always he came back to these simple facts, and in the morning, not being able to endure the suspense any longer, he went. She was in; she was alone; she had seen him with her acquaintances the night before, and she was expecting the call. She thought, also, she was prepared for it. She knew nothing at all of herself. When he entered, she did as she intended to do; that is, she rose haughtily and attempted to say the proud, disdainful words she had agreed with her heart to say. But she was only a woman—only a loving woman. When he fell at her feet weeping; when he held and kissed her hands and would not let them

go; when he wooed her with utter abnegation, with passionate contrition, with flaming desire, what could she do?

He was her first, her only love. He was her very lord and husband. He was the father of her child. Truly, he had sinned against her greatly. But he repented with all his heart. He said he would certainly die if she refused her pardon and her love, and she felt that he spoke the truth. Indeed, she now began to find it easier to forgive Almund than to forgive herself—her own readiness to be deceived; her impatience of destiny; her toleration of anything secret or underhand in a rite affecting so deeply her honor and her good name. These grave errors had justly brought her punishment. Shame and sorrow were the price she had paid for her own way. In a moment these things flashed through her mind, and she sat down and began to weep, but she let him sit at her side and comfort her.

He kissed her hands; he kissed her lips, and she trembled with the old, sweet pleasure. He drew her close to his heart, and called her "wife! his own sweet wife!" He said, "to give her that name before the whole world, was now the great longing of his heart." And so he won all he asked for—absolute pardon, confident trust, and unreserving affection.

How could she help it? God has so made woman, that under such circumstances, she is a partaker of His own divine compassion; and when Catherine pitied the penitent offender and forgave his offence and again loved him freely, she only beautifully proved herself a woman after God's own heart.

## THE MAN AT THE GATE.

"I am willing, with all My heart," said He.—*Pilgrim's Progress.*

When the sun shines fair on the smiling land,  
Or the stars walk out in a cloudless sky,  
When the waves are trampling wild on the sand,  
And the voice of the thunder passes by—

In summer and winter, in calm and storm,  
When the morning dawns, and the night falls  
late,  
We may catch—if we will—the steadfast form  
Of the Man that watches beside the Gate.

I saw the stars of the morning wait  
On their lofty towers, to watch the land;  
As a little child stole up to the Gate,  
And knocked with a tiny, trembling hand.

"I am only a little child, dear Lord;  
And my feet are stained already with sin;  
But they said, you had sent the children word,  
To come to the Gate and enter in."

The Man at the Gate looked up and smiled,  
A heavenly smile, and fair to see,  
And He opened, and bent to the pleading child,—  
"I am willing, with all My heart," said He.

The morning breaks with its golden showers,  
The pale stars pass away to their rest,  
As the little head with its wreath of flowers  
Is laid on the Shepherd's gentle breast.

While over it bends in speechless love  
The Head that is crowned with thorns for him;  
Ah, the angels may sigh in their songs above  
For the tears that are making the child's eyes  
dim!

\* \* \* \* \*

And still at the Gate the Saviour stood,  
And His face was lifted serene and fair,  
Though His raiment was heavy and red with  
blood,  
And the crown of thorns showed dark on His  
hair.

It was afternoon, and the sun was low,  
And the troubled winds sobbed long and loud,  
As an old man tottered across the snow,  
Which wrapped the earth in a bitter shroud;

He knocked with a withered, trembling hand:  
"I can but perish at last," he said,  
"For the cruel night comes fast on the land,  
And the morning will find me cold and dead.

"O Thou who watchest beside the Gate,  
Had I come to Thee in the days gone by,  
Thou hadst received me; but now too late,  
I lay me down on Thy threshold, to die.

"I have fought and finished an evil fight,  
I have earned the deadly wages of sin;  
It is hard to die in the snow to-night,  
But no man is willing to take me in."

The sun was low in the changing west,  
The shadows were heavy from hill and tree,  
As the Watchman opened the Gate of rest—  
"I am willing, with all My heart," said He.

\* \* \* \* \*

At the midnight there came the voice of one  
Who had crept to the Gate, through the blind-  
ing snow;

And who moaned at the Gate as one undone  
Might moan, at the sight of the last, dread woe.

A woman's voice, and it rose and fell  
On the muffled wings of the snowy night,  
With a trembling knocking which seemed to tell  
Of one who was chilled, and spent outright.

"I wove the crown for the Brow divine,  
I pierced the Hand that was stretched to save,  
I dare not pray that the moon may shine  
To show the prints of the nails I drave;

"I beat this night on my sinful breast,  
I dare not pray Him to succor me."  
But the Watchman opened the Gate of rest,—  
"I am willing, with all My heart," said He.

\* \* \* \* \*

Thus day and night they are pressing nigh,  
With tears and sighs, to the heavenly Gate;  
Where the Watchman stands in His majesty,  
With a patience which never has said, "*Too  
late!*"

Let the sorrowful children of want and sin  
Draw near to the Gate, whence none depart;  
Let the nations arise and enter in,  
For the Lord is willing, with all His heart.

## A POOR BOY.

BY COUNTESS DE GASPARIN.

Poor and very ugly as well as half-witted, this boy was the son of a shrewd shoemaker. His father was a great talker; musical too in his leisure hours; he had grey wandering eyes; a countenance difficult to decipher; with something about it slippery and evasive, reminding one of a serpent under dry leaves. Added to which, he had an abrupt voice; and was hard to live with at home.

He made a great deal of money; but it was spent as fast as it came in. This he averred, was his wife's fault. No order—no comfort—no foresight—a gawky slattern. He did not scruple to tell her this, and the poor weak creature, sure to excite her master's anger every time he chanced to see her, had over and above her natural gift of stupidity, all that awkwardness which comes from constant fault-finding.

She lived in an hostile atmosphere, her husband ridiculing her, whenever he did not revile her. Her gait was uncertain, she was incoherent, her mind always clouded by the fear of doing wrong, her hands often trembling though she was in the prime of life; her glance vacillating;

but it was only constant fear which prevented her from being straightforward.

Her home—had she a home? Never in her life had she said *my* kitchen, *my* bed. Her house was always dirty and disorderly—not that she did not sweep and clean—but that she had no faculty, none of that calm, that is necessary to systematic working. Without having thought the matter out, she had a vague sense, that the less her husband saw her, the more peace she had; so she bestirred herself as little as she possibly could.

In the morning, she would drag herself to the well, and having drawn her bucket full would languidly wash her potatoes, go in again, put the dinner on the fire, and with inefficient hand, brush the kitchen a little. As soon as she heard the master's voice, she spilled the water, let fall the broom, and the moment her work was over, would sit down on the hearthstone, and remain there, in the darkest corner, for hours together.

In the adjoining room sat the master amidst his hides, drawing thread after thread, and under his spectacles casting an evil eye at her, if she ventured across the threshold. She did this as little as possible. Such was their domestic life.

A son was growing up in this house.

The father, a great reader, pedantic and

pretentious, had chosen to call him Ulysses. Never was hapless new-comer on our earth saddled with a more palpable misnomer.

The shoemaker, disappointed in his wife, built great hopes upon this son; he would do this, that, and the other; he would make a gentleman of him! The mother for her part, made him in her own likeness.

As a mere urchin, he had a dishevelled head, with two round prominent eyes, wandering, colorless, scared like his mother's, dubious like his father's. Beneath was the most inconceivably twisted nose ever seen, a mouth from ear to ear, the whole mounted on two bow-legs, a badly made body, and arms whose dexterity might alone have excused their length; but had they been short as puffin's wings they could not have been more awkward.

Only, whether he inherited it of his father, or owed it to a certain inherent innocence, Ulysses did everything with an imperturbable assurance. True, he did everything ill, but he did it with a good heart. If he took up a mug, twice out of five times he would break it; if he moved a chair, he let it fall; if he lit the fire he blew the cinders into the porridge-pot; if he tried to feed the cow, he would have surely put out her eye with his fork but that the worthy animal, who knew him from a child, always turned away at once. Nothing daunted

him however, and when his father—who hesitated to acknowledge inherent want of sense in his son—would storm and discharge triple volleys of epithets, by no means select, Ulysses would look at him in amazement, shuffle his feet, shrug his shoulders, in a way all his own, and break out into an imbecile horse-laugh.

At school he fared no better. Ulysses, whose mind remained almost impervious to the letters of the alphabet, was more than ever shut up when it came to syllables; while between syllables and words, yawned a quite impassable abyss.

It was the same with arithmetic. Ulysses knew that one apple and two apples made three apples, that when the innkeeper's son took two he had only one left, but this transaction translated into figures left him stunned and stupefied. He would contemplate with his unquiet eyes the white symbols on the black-board, crush the chalk between his fingers, and then pass them over his face, till the whole school burst out laughing and the master put him behind the door, and made him kneel there.

His best Sundays were spent in the wood-hole. For as to the Catechism, Ulysses never got beyond the first half of the first sentence. It is but just however to state that he repeated it five times, ten times, that he would have repeated it

twenty, or thirty times, if the master's anger did not break the spell.

His father would say, "It will all come right, by and by; he's not stupid, take my word for it."

What with the great ruler of the school-master falling sometimes on the fingers, sometimes on the back; and what with the cuffs and kicks bestowed on him by his father, Ulysses grew indeed,—but it did not come right.

He remained where he was, knowing parrot-fashion the little he did know, not the least malignant, self-complacent, turning up his twisted nose with the air of a youth who, if he would, could afford to make fun of all the rest of the world.

A horrid suspicion at last dawned upon his father's mind—that of his son being a simpleton. He resisted it, at first through pride, then through a species of instinctive affection little higher than that of the animals. He knew himself. He knew that from the very moment when he lost all hopes of Ulysses, he should begin to hate him. This thought was painful; he clung might and main to his illusion; only, he began to look more than ever askance at his wife.

The poor mother, for her part, would gladly have loved her son. Alas! the proper spring was broken; when he was

beaten she only suffered with a passive suffering, that never led her to take his part—that was all. While his father was still in doubt upon the subject, the stupidity of Ulysses was a settled point with his little playfellows. They made fun of him; they turned him round their fingers, not teasing him too much, because he bore all so good-naturedly. The more they bantered him, the better he was pleased; he believed everything with a marvelous credulity; always good-humored; laughing with those who laughed at him. As to ill-luck, he took it, as it came; and good luck too. There was no holiday without Ulysses. He was put at the head of the troop; and the urchins played him fine tricks. He was delighted; he thought himself the sharpest of the whole party. But there was nothing hostile about his vanity. It did not spring from self-love, but from unlimited trust, unfathomable innocence, innate ingenuousness, proof against the most sobering of experiences. Tricked yesterday, Ulysses bore no malice; he was ready to be tricked again to-morrow.

And what tricks the girls and boys used to play him in the court-yard of the old manor! How they used to laugh at him! Happy days for poor Ulysses.

“Come here and try, Ulysses; come and try, we want you.”

Ulysses came forward.

"You are the only one to do this well."

They were playing at the pyramid. Ulysses was hoisted upon the shoulders of two boys, rocked, shaken by them, while they all called out, "Take care! stand steady!" till after incredible efforts to keep his equilibrium, he fell like a lump of lead, rubbed his knees and elbows, then looked at the rogues, who were in convulsions of laughter, and only said, "Ah, very well, if I had liked!"

There was mischief enough in these village lads, but no malignity. Ulysses was not any one's friend, but no one would deliberately have hurt him. He got plenty of cuffs, it is true, and they risked his bones without scruple; but he himself did not take much care of them. Indeed, but for a certain obtuseness, which rendered him half-witted, Ulysses had in him the making of a hero—indifference to pain, perfect self-reliance, and that simple resolution which marches straight forward, through fire and water, to its goal. Poor Ulysses! he was happy in these gay hours of childhood, always a prominent person, and even if not, leaping, playing, animated by the same spirit as the rest. He had like others a joyous childhood sown with pleasant memories.

For him, as for the rest, there had been

sunshine, apples, games, merry holidays, a few hard knocks, and all the rest. As for ridicule, he did not see his own infirmity, he did not feel it; as for his father's brutalities, he had never known him different; as for the suffering apathy of his mother, he did not understand it. As he grew up, as she got weaker, he did what he could for her; he carried water, he split wood. She used to say to him, "You are a good fellow, you are." He believed her; this went on for some years.

With his fifteenth year, there came an increase of awkwardness; his whole life took a new turn. His ugliness grew with his growth. Ulysses became preternaturally tall, clumsy and backward. His companions grown older, were more naughty and dragged him into worse scrapes. The schoolmaster had given him up long ago. His mother became a greater nonentity every day. His father was more hard and irritable; a savage expression sometimes passed over his face; never a word of affection, never a word of indifference; he was either silent, or storming. The father in his workshop, the mother in the kitchen, the son driven from pillar to post by volleys of oaths,—bullied for what he did, because he did it ill; bullied for what he did not do, because he left it undone—such was their life.

For at last the father knew that his son was a half-witted creature, below the average, below the most inferior, a son who knew nothing, who would know nothing, who was good for nothing; a lad that others laughed at; a booby, the standing joke of the village,—his son, his!

All this was clear, decisive. The thing once proved, the blow once fallen, the father began to detest his son. There was neither remorse nor reaction. As he was the master, he tyrannized over him. Henceforth, the only portion of Ulysses was work beyond his strength, poor and scanty food, rude blows from a heavy hand upon every occasion. All this without premeditation, quite naturally and spontaneously.

Ill received, ill treated, rebuffed by all, except such companions as used him for their sports, Ulysses lost much of his innocent confidence. Yet if they took the pains, the village lads could still waken in him some of his old love of adventure. Then there were exploits that served for the diversion of the long winter evenings.

Sometimes they would take him to the public-house, make him tipsy, and egg him on to attack some good boxer, who left him half-dead. Sometimes they persuaded him to go and sing under the window of the richest girl in the place; and the father

of the lady would throw a log at him, the brothers sally forth, and Ulysses come back with his head laid open. At other times they would get him into scrapes with the rural police, and when the mine was sprung leave him in their hands; making their own escape. Then the official wrath fell heavily on Ulysses; fine after fine was imposed, the shoemaker wielded his terrible cudgel, the terrified lad would hide behind the faggots in the shed, and it was much if his mother dared to keep a little cold soup for him.

Then, suddenly, as the truth had broken on his father's mind, there dawned a ray of light on that of the son. A consciousness of his inferiority came over him—nothing very positive, but a kind of self-dissatisfaction, and an apprehension of others. A confused sense of his own ugliness awoke, then grew, till the moment when he fully understood to what a degree he was misshapen, grotesque, ugly, with an absurd, inexorable, crushing, hopeless ugliness.

That was the first step; others soon followed. He saw himself awkward, stupid, even more so than he was. Sorrow developed his mind. A soul was given him to suffer with. All his life passed before him like a bad farce, of which he had been the clown.

He did not lose himself in analysis, but

the tide of sadness went on rising, and submerged him. He became gloomy, unsociable; he would glide along the houses, escape from his former companions; and his task done, climb to his garret, throw himself on his pallet, swallowed up in the contemplation of his misery.

No more smiles, no more confidence; an immeasurable wretchedness paralyzed him. He had no anger, no hatred against any one, only he deeply abhorred himself.

When he had once fully understood that he was an utter failure, that no one loved him, that all ridiculed him, that there was no help for it, he began to droop, as his mother had done, but with fuller consciousness of what he was, and how he suffered.

Formerly, after the paternal storms, he would run off to the village, come in for fresh blows there, and return amused. Now there was no more elasticity, no incidents, everything had foundered. His solitary days succeeded each other, all equally unhappy. Atrophy set in, and he rapidly declined.

His father was only irritated by his growing uselessness. The axe and the hoe slipped out of his weak grasp. The shoemaker's bursts of rage which used to glide harmlessly over his son's inert organism, his abusive language, his rough treatment, now told on mind and body alike. He did

not ask affection from any one; it never entered his head to bespeak his father's compassion, but he was dying for want of affection.

Sometimes, when the anguish was too great, he would look at his mother. His mother, on her part, looked at him with surprise. She saw that there was something wrong; that Ulysses got silent; that sometimes tears gathered in his eyes; that he was very pale, and could hardly walk; that his father's rages terrified him; but she could analyze nothing.

The disease increased. His father's brutalities, insufficient food, heart sorrow, soon undermined the poor body which had never had any overplus of vitality. At night, fever consumed him; in the morning, he was cold as death; there was never a drop of wine to revive him. Extensive sores—that livery of extreme destitution—came to finish what atrophy had begun. He had to give up all work. His father said nothing; he saw that his son was ill, and got so much the harder.

Ulysses, idle through necessity, hardly dared to creep down twice a day from his garret and take his place at meals. After getting a little warmed in the darkest corner of the hearth, he would drag himself up again. He passed whole hours motionless, without amusement, without consola-

tion, repelled from the past by bitter memories, from the future by vague terrors; weak, languid, without a murmur or complaint gazing at the dull daylight which shone through his dirty window, or at the bare walls of his wretched attic.

He had done as the wild beasts do—he had gone apart to die. His mother watched with a stupid eye the progress of his disease. One day when his father was out she went up to Ulysses and asked him in a whisper what ailed him.

“I suffer,” he replied in a listless voice.

She drew nearer, her son’s emaciation frightened her. She pushed his coarse shirt aside, saw the ravages the sores had made, gave a suppressed moan, and went for some rags and vinegar to dress them. Every day she did this secretly. Her hands were clumsy, her treatment wretched enough; but what good it did Ulysses! How he used to listen for her furtive step upon the stair.

About the same time the pastor and the family at the manor asked where Ulysses was. As soon as it was known that he was ill, he was visited. His neglected condition appalled his visitors. All manner of help arrived, but Ulysses, though grateful, was stupefied and reserved. There was no getting at him. Then he was spoken to of God and the Saviour. He listened seri-

ously with a pensive air, but he said nothing.

This went on for some time. Then—a little from weariness of talking—recourse was had to God's own Book. They read him the life of the Lord Jesus. Ulysses listened, his face lit up, his eyes brightened. I know not what intimate content—not the stupid satisfaction of yore; no, something humble, reticent, noble, ay noble—was shed over his pale face.

This went on progressing with steady royal step—as God works when He does work. No clouds arose. This sun never stood still. No doubt, no fear, very little difficulty. The gospel, in all its beauty, power and tenderness, penetrated into this heart, disinherited heretofore of happiness. This heart grew radiant.

Jesus had met this fainting spirit in the desert. He had lifted this poor child from the earth into His arms. Jesus was the first who ever loved him. Accordingly, how well Ulysses knew His voice from all others! And this Jesus would come and spend long hours at his side in his garret. He hardly dared to speak to men, but to Jesus! he could tell everything. Jesus who had been hungry and cold; Jesus who had been insulted throughout one dark night about Easter time; Jesus who had touched the leper with His own hand;

Jesus was his friend, his brother, at the same time that He was his God. He was quite at home with Jesus!

As long as he could hold up he would drag about his garret, peaceful and pensive, his glance fixed elsewhere. "I am soon going," he would say, and then he would sit upon his poor pallet, while so much joy lit up his face, the few words he spoke vibrated so strongly, he possessed his Saviour in such royal guise, that one felt overcome in the presence of this poor weak creature; overcome and humbled, adoring God, because His hand was there.

The poor mother had taken to loving her son with all the little strength she had left. When he spoke of God she tried to understand; when he prayed, she knelt down beside him. She crept very quietly into the illuminated atmosphere where her son abode. She found it was good to be there.

One night he cheerfully embraced his mother and spoke more to her about the Lord Jesus than he had yet done, then when it got late, said, "You must go down now, mother; father will scold."

His mother had not a quick intuition, but something weighed upon her heart; she would have wished to remain, but her husband was beginning to walk up and down in the room below.

"Go, mother," said Ulysses. He turned

to the wall; she looked long at him, left the room, listened to his breathing, she did not know why, then went down stairs.

That night the angels of God came for Lazarus. He went away noiselessly, humbly. In what a rapture of bliss, Eternity will tell us.

## HEAVEN'S HARVEST-HOME.

BY AMELIA E. BARR.

In the happy harvest fields, oh, what gladsome  
singing!

Men and maids and children joining in the  
strain,

For in merry triumph they are homeward bringing,  
Poppy-wreathed and loaded high, the last har-  
vest wain.

“Over now the sowing and the reaping,  
Earth has given her fruits into our keeping;  
Over now the labor and the doubting,  
We are bringing home the harvest, shouting,  
Harvest-home! harvest-home!”

In a silent upper room a sad household kneeling,  
Weeping, praying, but, alas! uncomforted,  
Though a sense of rapture through the room is  
stealing,

As the waiting angels guard well the dying bed.  
Waiting till some mighty word is spoken;  
Waiting, with some marvelous sweet token,  
Till, amid the praying and the weeping,  
Breaks the harvest song of Death's great  
reaping—

The spirit's harvest-home.

Weeping mortals only heard, just a gentle sighing,  
Just a flutter, as of wings, stir the still warm air;  
Only heard a whisper, “Pray, for she is dying;”  
Only heard the broken words of that parting  
prayer.

But the angels heard a mighty singing,  
Heard it through the endless spaces ringing,  
Heard above earth's tumult and her weeping,  
Heaven rejoicing, for one spirit keeping,  
Through all her golden streets, a harvest-  
home.

## THE HEROINE OF A FISHING VILLAGE.

BY JAMES RUNCIMAN.

Until she was nineteen years old, Dorothy lived a very uneventful life; for one week was much the same as another, in the placid existence of the village. On Sunday mornings, when the church bells began to ring, you would meet her walking over the moor, with a springy step. Her shawl was gay, and her dress was of the most pronounced color that could be bought in the market town. Her brown hair was gathered into a net, and her calm eyes looked from under an old-fashioned bonnet of straw. Her feet were always bare, but she carried her shoes and stockings slung over her shoulders. When she got near the church, she sat down in the shade of a hedge, and put them on; then she walked the rest of the distance in a cramped and civilized gait.

On the Monday mornings early, she carried the water from the well. Her great "skeel" was poised easily on her head; and as she strode along,—singing lightly without shaking a drop of water over the edge of her pail, you could see how she had come by her erect carriage. When the

boats came in, she went to the beach, and helped to carry the baskets of fish to the cart. She was then dressed in a sort of thick flannel blouse, and a singular quantity of brief petticoats. Her head was bare, and she looked far better than in her Sunday clothes.

If the morning were fine, she sat in the sun, and baited the lines; all the while lilt-ing old-country songs in her guttural dialect. In the evening, she would spend some time chatting with other lasses in the Row; but she never had a very long spell of that pastime, for she had to be at work, winter and summer, by about five or six in the morning. The fisherfolk do not waste many candles, by keeping late hours. She was very healthy and powerful; very ignorant, and very modest. Had she lived by one of the big harbors, where fleets of boats come in, she might have been as rough and brazen as the girls often are in those places. But in her secluded little village, the ways of the people were old-fashioned and decorous; and girls were very restrained in their manners. No one would have taken her to be anything more than an ordinary country girl, had not a chance enabled her to show herself full of bravery and resource.

Every boat in the village went away north one evening, and not a man re-

mained in the Row, excepting three very old fellows, who were long past work of any kind. When a fisherman grows helpless with age, he is kept by his own people; and his days are passed in quietly smoking on the kitchen settle, or in looking dimly out over the sea from the bench at the door. But a man must be sorely "failed" before he is reduced to idleness, and able to do nothing that needs strength. A southerly gale, with a southerly sea, came away in the night, and the boats could not beat down from the northward. By daylight, they were all safe in a harbor about eighteen miles north of the village. The sea grew worse and worse, till the usual clouds of foam flew against the houses, or skimmed away into the fields beyond. When the wind reached its height, the sounds it made in the hollows were like distant firing of small-arms; and the waves in the hollow rocks seemed to shake the ground over the cliffs.

A little schooner came round the point, running before the sea. She might have got clear away, had she clawed a short way out, risking the beam sea, to have made the harbor where the fishers were. But the skipper kept her close in; and presently she struck on a long tongue of rocks, that trended far out eastward. The tops of her masts seemed nearly to meet; so it ap-

peared as if she had broken her back. The seas flew sheer over her, and the men had to climb into the rigging. All the women were watching and waiting, to see her go to pieces. There was no chance of getting a boat out, so the helpless villagers waited to see the men drown; and the women cried in their shrill, piteous manner.

Dorothy said, "Will she break up in an hour? If I thought she would hing there, I would be away for the lifeboat."

But the old men said, "You can never cross the burn."

Four miles south—behind the point—there was a village where a lifeboat was kept; but just half-way there, a stream run into the sea, and across this stream there was only a plank bridge. Half a mile below the bridge, the water spread over the broad sands, and became very shallow and wide. Dorothy spoke no more, only to say, "I'll away!"

She ran across the moor for a mile, and then scrambled down to the sand, so that the tearing wind might not impede her. It was dangerous work for the next mile. Every yard of the way, she had to splash through the foam, because the great waves were rolling up close to the foot of the cliffs. An extra strong sea might have taken her off her feet; but she did not think of that; she only thought of saving her

breath, by escaping the direct onslaught of the wind.

When she came to the mouth of the burn, her heart failed her a little. There was three-quarters of a mile, covered with creamy foam, and she did not know but what she might be taken out of her depth. Yet she determined to risk it, and plunged in at a run. The sand was hard under her feet; but—as she said—when the piled foam came softly up to her waist, she “felt gey funny.” Half-way across, she stumbled into a hole, caused by a swirling eddy, and she thought all was over; but her nerve never failed her, and she struggled until she got a footing again. When she reached the hard ground, she was wet to the neck, and her hair was sodden with her one plunge “overhead.” Her clothes troubled her with their weight, in crossing the moor; she put off all she did not need, and pressed forward again. Presently, she reached the house where the coxswain of the lifeboat lived. She gasped out, “The schooner! On the Letch! Norrard!”

The coxswain, who had seen the schooner go past, knew what was the matter. He said, “Here, wife, look after the lass!” and ran out.

The lass needed looking after, for she had fainted. But her work was well done. The lifeboat went round the point, ran

north, and took six men ashore from the schooner. The captain had been washed overboard, but the others were saved by Dorothy's daring and endurance.

## THE LITTLE COMFORTER.

BY AMELIA E. BARR.

I have a little Comforter  
That climbs upon my knee,  
And makes the world seem possible  
When things go wrong with me.  
She never is the one to say,  
"If you had only been  
More careful and more sensible,  
This thing had been foreseen."  
She blesses me,  
Caresses me,  
And whispers, "Never mind:  
To-morrow night  
All will be right,  
My papa, good and kind."

To give me wise and good advice  
I have of friends a score;  
But then the trouble ever is,  
I knew it all before.  
And when one's heart is full of care,  
One's plans all in a mess,  
The wisest reasoning, I think,  
Can't make the trouble less.  
My Mamie's way  
Is just to say,  
"Oh, papa, don't be sad:  
To-morrow night  
All will be right,  
And then we shall be glad."

Some think I have been much to blame;  
Some say, "I told you so;"  
And others sigh, "What can't be helped  
Must be endured, you know."

Of course, if trouble can be helped,  
Then crying is in vain;  
But when a wrong will not come right,  
Why should I not complain?

    In Mamie's eyes  
    I'm always wise;  
She never thinks me wrong;  
    It's understood  
    I'm always good—  
Good as the day is long.

All day I've kept a cheerful face,  
All day been on the strain;  
Now I may rest, or I may sigh,  
Or, if I like, complain.

My daughter thinks as papa thinks,  
And in her loving sight

I am a clever, prudent man,  
Who has done all things right.

    Faith so complete,  
    Oh, it is sweet,  
When neither wise nor strong;  
    But Love stands best  
    The better test

Of Sorrow and of Wrong.

Then come, my little Comforter,  
And climb upon my knee;  
You make the world seem possible  
When things go wrong with me.

For you've the wisdom far beyond  
The reach of any sage,

The loving, tender, hopeful trust  
That best can strengthen age.

    Say, "Papa, dear,  
    Now don't you fear:

Before to-morrow night  
The cares you dread

Will all have fled,  
And everything be right."

## IN MORTAL PERIL.

BY RICHARD DOWLING.

## PART I.

The great feature of Bayfield is its railway junction. Half a mile from the line stands a square tower, and on the top of the tower rests a huge iron tank, which yields water for the locomotives. On the ground floor is the engine that works the pump; and far below the level of the ground, in silence and eternal darkness, sleeps the well from which the water supply for Bayfield Junction is raised. The flow of the water in the well is not ample or regular, and in times of drought the pump has to be kept going beyond the ordinary hours of the working day.

William Lee, a good-looking, good-humored young man, had charge of the pump tower on ordinary occasions. When the engine worked over-time, Fred Merrick, who looked after the donkey-engine at the goods-store of Bayfield Station, lent him a hand. At the goods-store, Saturday was always a short day; at the Tower, as the water-tower was called for brevity, Saturday was a long day, for, if the well would yield sufficient, Sunday had to be provided for, so as to avoid lighting the fire on the Sabbath.

The fifteenth of September fell on a Saturday, so, in any case, Fred Merrick would have worked for a spell at the Tower. This day, in order to oblige William Lee, Merrick had arranged to take the others' place at nine in the forenoon, and stay till six in the evening. Any one who knew Lee would have done a good deal to oblige him; he was so pleasant-mannered and amiable and good-natured.

On this occasion there were particular reasons why a friend should put himself out of his own way to oblige Lee. He had been left fifty pounds in the will of his godfather, the saddler of Lauriston, a town thirty miles off, and he wanted to go and get his money that day.

"I suppose, Fred," said he to his substitute, "you know that I have made it all right with Kate Denham?"

Merrick nodded.

"Well, I'm off to get the money, and there's to be a sale at Burkett's on Monday, and Kate and I think of buying the sticks we shall want for our home there."

Fred Merrick nodded again and sighed. "You couldn't do better. You could not do better in the way of a wife, and the things at Burkett's will go cheap. You're a lucky man, Will Lee—a lucky man to get Kate Denham. She's worth half the girls in Bayfield put together. I'd have

asked her myself, only I hadn't the pluck. I wish you all the happiness in the world, Will."

Kate Denham was not a great beauty, but she was the brightest and cleverest girl in the village. She had laughed at love, until Will Lee came. She accepted him in a free, off-hand way. She loved him, but told him it was her opinion "there was no necessity for people to behave like a pair of fools."

"I like you best of all," she admitted frankly, "but that is no reason why there should be any rubbish between us." Her notion of "rubbish" was sentimentality.

That Saturday morning Lee left for Lauriston at ten o'clock. He got back to Bayfield between four and five, and went straight from the train to the cottage where Kate lived. There was a garden partly in front of the cottage and partly at the left-hand side. Before the cottage grew flowers and herbs. On the left was a privet hedge, and beyond the privet hedge was a garden with fruit and vegetables. By the side of the privet hedge ran a walk, and half-way down this walk there was a weeping willow which had been trained into a bower. The trunk of the tree sloped inward from the hedge, and in the centre of the bower stood a rustic table.

As the girl and the young man entered

the bower, the latter pulled a small brown-paper bag out of his pocket, and, handing it to her, put his arm round her waist, and kissed her, saying, "There, Kate, that's the money for the furniture. I drew it out of the bank in Lauriston in gold, as I thought that would be the handiest way to have it for Burkett's sale on Monday." He kissed her again, and they both sat down.

At the same moment that they sat down in the bower, a wayworn, ragged man sat down on the outside of the hedge, with his back against the privet, and his legs doubled up under him. He was a stranger to the place, and, to judge by his appearance, a tramp whose wanderings had not brought him much content or comfort.

The tramp took out of his pocket a piece of brown paper in which something was wrapped up. He placed the parcel beside him, and was about to throw himself back against the hedge, when his ears caught the voices of Lee and Kate Denham.

The tramp arrested the motion of his body, and remained listening. It is not in the nature of a man of his ways to court unnecessary attention. Hence he drew his body forward and continued sitting upright. Had he flung himself back, he would have made a noise and attracted the observation of the talkers to his vicinity.

He listened to the dialogue for a while.

It did not entertain him. It was about love, and would not interest any one but the speakers. It concerned their future life and happiness. The wayfarer thought it intolerable stuff—he gave up eavesdropping, and remembering the brown paper parcel he had taken from his pocket, opened it on the grass by his side. From another pocket, the man produced a jack-knife, opened the blade, and laid the knife on the grass beside the brown paper. He was deliberate in his actions. He possessed no money, and all the food at his disposal lay there upon the ground. He had plenty of time.

All was now ready for his meal, but his mind did not seem at rest. He fumbled in his pockets, and drew forth a short clay pipe. He looked into the bowl, then thrust his little finger to the bottom. There was not a grain of tobacco in it. With a muttered curse he angrily returned the empty pipe to his pocket, and taking up the bread and knife, cut off a slice of the bread, and a piece of pork fat, and with the knife still held in the heel of his right hand, raised the bread to his open mouth.

His whole soul was concentrated on the food. His eyes were fixed hungrily on it; his mouth opened wider as the morsel approached his lips.

When the food was no further than a

hand's breadth from the black, gap-toothed cavern of his mouth, his hand suddenly paused, as if arrested by a powerful spring. The eager hungry look died in his eyes; he no longer even saw the food. His eyes were blind by the withdrawal of his attention from them. His whole body became rigid, as if his veins had turned to iron. Every faculty of his being was concentrated on his hearing. He was listening with all his ears, with all his body, with all his soul.

"Do, please, Kate, take the money. Put the bag in your pocket. You know it is all for you, every penny, to buy the furniture. Keep it for me, any way, until Monday. It will be safer with you than with me. You are living in your own house, and I am only in lodgings. I never had near so much money before, and it would seem as though you were already my very own if I knew you had the money in your pocket. It's all in the bag—all in gold. I did not spend a penny of it. I did not break a single sovereign. There are forty sovereigns and twenty half sovereigns. Look!"

He opened the brown-paper bag and poured a glittering stream of gold out on the rustic table in front of the girl.

"I won't take the money," said she; "put it in your pocket. It is much safer with

you than with me. I do think you were rash to get it in gold. I should be afraid of my life to have so much money in my charge."

With noiseless stealth the man in the road lowered the hand raised to his mouth, and put the knife and morsel of bread and meat on the ground. With the most elaborate caution, he turned, and kneeling up, peered into the privet hedge. Then, with caution like that of an American Indian, he began moving the twigs and leaves aside.

The ground on which the tramp knelt was higher than the ground of the garden. The sun shone brightly overhead. Through the leaves of the willow spears of sharp sunlight pierced the roof of the arbor here and there. One broad and irregular shaft fell upon the table, and broke into a thousand gleaming, glittering splotches and sparks among the pieces of scattered gold.

In the verdurous gloom of the hedge, two points of fierce light glared on the gold. The eyes of the tramp had found a tiny rift in the leaves, and were fastened in savage greed upon the money.

Once more the faculties of the stranger were concentrated in sight, and for a while he heard nothing of what passed between the lovers.

At length he was awakened from his trance of gloating. The whole pool of gold

was swept up together by a man's hand, poured into a brown paper, and the bag dropped carefully into the breast coat pocket of the young man.

The tramp could hear once more.

"Very well, dear. But if you won't keep the money for us, help me to make it safe. Have you a needle and thread? Of course you have. Now stitch up the pocket so that the bag can't fall out, and you must cut out the stitches on Monday, and I shall feel that we both have a hand in keeping our money safe; just as if we were married already."

The listener could distinctly hear the sound of the stitching. The young man in the bower spoke again:

"Now one kiss, and I'm off. You'll come to meet me at nine, sharp, at the corner of the wood, and we'll walk back together. Till then, good-bye!"

The tramp drew his body back, without moving his feet. He heard the footsteps of the lovers as they left the summer house. When they had got a few paces away, he crossed the road quickly, and clambered over a gate into a field. He had left the food and his knife by the path. He had never seen fifty pounds in gold before. Fancy fifty pounds, and in every pound, twenty shillings; and there had been only a couple, or three feet of hedge between

him and it! Why had he not dashed at it, and fled with the speed of the wind away with the spoil?

“But wait! wait! wait!”

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## PART II.

William Lee walked out of the garden with a light, free step, and took his way towards the Tower. As Lee turned into the by-way, the tramp clambered over the gate into the road, and followed him with careful tread and eyes that sought to look careless.

Lee carried his head thrown back, swung his right arm gaily, and kept his left hand in his trousers pocket, and his left arm pressed closely against the brown-paper bag of gold, stitched in the breast pocket of his coat.

It was a few minutes past six when he reached the engine-house. “Well,” said Merrick, cheerfully, “did you do your business at Lauriston?”

“Oh, yes; that’s all right, and I’m obliged to you. I am a few minutes late, I am afraid,” said Lee, as he took off his coat, threw it on a bench at the right-hand head of the engine, and began putting on his white slops.

"Oh, never mind me; you're on till nine, aren't you?"

"Yes," answered Lee, looking first at the furnace and then at the glass tube; "I'm on till nine."

"The fire's all right; but you might give her a drop of water," said Merrick as he went to the door. "Good-night."

"Good-night," and Lee was alone.

The ground-floor of the Tower was a room of about twenty feet square. The door stood in the front, not facing the railway line, but the path or byway leading out of the main road or Junction Road as it has come to be called. On either side of the door was a small, oblong window, the glass of which was never cleaned, and which admitted very little light by day, and none at all in twilight. Right before the door, and only a few feet from it, rose the frame of the pumping machine. Slightly to the right stood the engine, and on the left-hand of the pumping apparatus revolved the heavy fly-wheel. Between the furnace and the fly-wheel lay the well-head, an opening between three and four feet square, protected by a single bar of iron, breast-high, and up and down which the pump-rods rose and fell alternately, in dull monotony. From the impenetrable darkness of the well came upward, through its dark, moist mouth, the hiss of escaping

water and the heavy squeezing thud of the plungers, as they churned up and down in the sightless gloom below.

The boiler wanted water. Lee turned a tap and let it drink its fill. He looked round, and finding all right, sat down beside his rolled-up jacket, at the head of the engine, to rest and smoke, and give up his mind to dream over the delightful future.

How much he had to be thankful for! Kate was no pink-and-white beauty, but her dark hair and bright eyes were finer than any others in the county. And then all allowed, she was the cleverest and most sensible girl in those parts; and she was happy-minded, with always a song on her lips, when she was alone, and always a smile, when any one was by. There was not a young man in Bayfield who wouldn't be proud to call her sweetheart. Three months before, no one could persuade Lee that he ever could have summoned courage to ask her to be his; and now she was his very own! It was past belief! and yet it was deliciously true! What a long life of happiness stretched before them!

And to think of it, too, just when she had consented to be his wife, and he was casting about in his mind as to how he should manage to buy the furniture for their little new home, came this wholly unexpected fifty pounds—this fifty pounds now safe

sewed into the pocket of his coat on the bench beside him! It was past believing!

He knocked the ashes out of his pipe and rose. At that moment the form of a man appeared at the doorway, and threw a shadow across the floor of the engine-house. The shadow of the man was long and lean, the head and shoulders of it falling into the open jaws of the well in which the pump-rods rose and fell, drawing up and thrusting down the plungers, from which a dull, dead, thudding and hissing sound ascended from the damp darkness of the chasm.

"Can I have a light, gov'nor?" The tramp did not cross the threshold. He stood outside the Tower, holding his pipe forward in explanation.

"Of course. Come in and have a light and welcome," said Lee cordially. He rose and went with gestures of hospitable invitation towards the stranger. His mind was so full of the glow of pleasant thoughts that he would have felt it a physical pleasure to do any man a service.

The tramp passed out of the light of the level sun into the twilight of the room casting, as he did so, a quick, furtive glance at the jacket lying on the bench.

"I'll get you a light in a minute," said Lee, going to the furnace door and opening it. "I've just let some water into the

boiler, and have to keep the door shut to blow up the fire to warm it." He was genial and talkative out of the fulness of his heart.

The tramp stood holding the tobacco pipe in his hand. "I see," said he in a dogged, heavy tone.

"My mate has put in too much coal," said Lee. "It damps the fire. Here you are!" He handed the other a light, and standing up with his back against the bar across the opening of the well, watched the tramp draw the flame into his pipe. "Why there's no tobacco in it! Maybe you haven't a fill. I'll give you some of mine." He went to his jacket, and came back with a tin box, in which he kept his supply.

The tramp followed him with heavy eyes. If Lee could have seen those eyes, his suspicions might have been awakened; but his back was towards the man. "Thank you," said the latter, as he filled his pipe from the tin box.

"He's a tramp," thought Lee; "poor fellow, he may be tired." He said, "If you like, you may sit down and rest. I'm all by myself, and will be glad of a chat."

"Thank you," again said the man. He took a low stool between the door and the well-head. Lee leaned against the door-jamb, and seeing the other did not appear disposed to converse, he went on talking of

what he knew most about—his engine; excluding technicalities, out of consideration for his visitor.

"Lots of people don't know much about an engine—do you?"

"Nothing," said the tramp.

"Well now, of course, you must have fire and water, or you can't have steam, and if you can't have steam, where are you to get your pressure? And without your pressure your engine is only fit to break up for old iron."

"Ay," said the other, without any manner of interest. He sat so that he could see, without moving, Lee's coat, in which he knew the gold had been sewn.

"Fire and water and pressure are all very well in their own way, but you may have too much of any of them. If you have too much water, you can't get steam; and if you have too much fire, you have too much pressure; and if you have too much pressure, you have a burst. Do you see?"

"Oh, yes."

"You saw me shut the furnace door now? Well, I did that to blow up the fire, same as a bellows. But I mustn't leave it shut too long, or I should have too much steam."

"You would?" said the tramp, in a tone of awakening interest. "And if you had too much steam?" he asked.

"Why, then, I'd have a burst."

"So that, suppose you fell asleep now, the engine would burst?"

"Yes, if it didn't wake me before."

"And if it burst 'twould blow down this place?" He was now very much interested indeed.

"Well, I can't say for certain, but very likely."

"And you are all alone and no one is coming here to-night?"

"No one is coming here," said Lee, with emphasis on the last word for the delight of his own ears, and a smile on his face for thinking of Kate coming to the corner of the wood to meet him, on his way home.

"Ah!" said the tramp, getting up and keeping his hand on the bar across the head of the well and his back to the fly-wheel.

"Are you thinking of going?" asked Lee.

"Yes, I must be getting on; and I'd be very much obliged, if you'd spare me another fill of tobacco."

"To be sure," said Lee, handing him the box.

The hands of the tramp had grown strangely clumsy. He was not able to fill his pipe at once. Something seemed wrong with his fingers; and in the end, all the tobacco fell out of the box, and dropped to the floor close to the edge of the well. He

stooped to pick it up, but failed to bend low enough.

"My back!" he exclaimed, "I've the rheumatics. Beg pardon, gov'nor, I can't stoop."

"Never mind," said Lee. "I'll get it."

The young man leaned forward under the iron bar, until his hand touched the floor, where the tobacco lay, and his head was over the well. Quick as lightning, the other man sprang behind the stooping man, and pushed him forward, and downward.

With a cry of horror and despair, William Lee shot into the blind abyss of the well.

With a cry like the growl of a wild beast, the tramp leaped upon the jacket, lying on a bench, rolled it up in frantic haste, and thrust it under his coat. Then, without looking to the right or the left, he dashed out of the engine house, muttering, "Let it burst now, and bury him!"

The engine went on quietly and evenly. The plungers of the pump rose and fell, with their dull, dead thump. The water escaping far down the well, hissed in the depth of the rayless night of the humid shaft.

## PART III.

"What can be keeping him? It was just nine when I left the house. It must be a quarter past now. This is the first time he was ever late with me. I hope nothing is wrong! I did feel uneasy about his having all that money with him. But it is safe enough stitched in his pocket."

The girl paced up and down the deserted road, in the deep darkness of the hour. There was no timid blood in her veins, but now her soul had cause for fear. She knew her lover would be with her, if possible. What could be keeping him? Something serious, beyond doubt—something of grave and unpleasant moment! Something dire and unforeseen! She would, she could, bear suspense no longer—she must know all—the worst!

Gathering her shawl around her, she turned into the by-road leading to the Tower, and hurried forward. When she had got half-way she paused to look and listen.

She had been walking in the middle of the road. She moved to the left-hand side so as to command a view of the Tower door.

She bent her head forward and looked.

Close to the ground in front of her burned a fiery light, like the eye of some

gigantic beast crouching low for the spring. From this blazing eye now and then fell glittering drops like incandescent tears.

"The furnace! But I never saw it burn so bright before."

She listened.

There was a loud whirring and buzzing and groaning in the air fronting her, and the air around her shook and murmured.

"The engine! but I never heard it go so frantically before. Oh, what is the matter?"

She bent her head and caught her breath, and ran at the top of her speed towards the flaming eye—the panting beast.

In the doorway of the Tower she paused.

By the light of the red-hot furnace door she saw the great wheel flying round like a circle of polished copper. She heard the pistons of the engine panting faster than a dog wild with flight. She felt the air of the room beat against her like the heart of a bird mad with terror. She felt the walls of the Tower vibrate like the parchment of a beaten drum.

"Will! Will! Where are you, Will?"

Out of the bowels of the earth beneath her came the answer—

"Fly!"

"Will! Where are you? Speak."

"Away! For your life! Away!"

"Where are you?"

She crosses the floor, and stands close to the whirring fly-wheel—close to the yawning abyss.

Up out of that abyss comes a voice for the third time—

“Fly! Fly for your life! The engine must burst in a few minutes!”

She knows now whence the voice comes. She leans over. She can see nothing. It seems as though the Tower must be shaken down from its summit.

“What can I do for you?”

“Fly at once; if you love me! I am a dead man. There is not a moment. Go, or I will think that you hate me. Save yourself. I am a dead man!”

“I will not go.”

She kneels down, and leans over the pit.

“Go, Kate, for nothing can save me. Oh, give me one thought to cheer me at the end, Kate—the thought that you are safe!”

“I will stay, and die with you.”

“I tell you, it is a matter of a few seconds. Oh, go! Go! For the love of me—for the love of Heaven—fly!”

“I shall stay, and die with you.”

“You are not going? I can hear by your voice you are looking down. Listen, while you are there the plates of the boilers are opening. In a minute you must die if you stay.”

"I shall stay, and die. Can I do nothing while I wait? Can I not let off steam?"

"No, no; that would be sudden death."

"Let water into the boiler?"

"No, no; that would be worse."

"Can I do nothing for you?"

"Oh yes, yes, yes, my darling, you can."

"What?"

"Fly!"

"I have told you I shall die here. Can I do nothing for you, darling; for us?"

"Then, in Heaven's name be it! Take the rod by the door, and knock out the furnace bars."

"Yes; I know. How?"

"Open the furnace and prise the bars up."

"Yes."

She springs up, wheels round, and seizes the long bar standing by the door.

She knows more of these things than other women; he has told her much. By nature she is stronger than most women. The thought that she is trying to save him gives her the strength of a man.

She knocks up the latch of the furnace door and opens the door, and thrusts the long iron rod desperately into the fiercely burning fire. She raises the rod high above her head, and drives it down between two of the bars, and then springs into the air, and clutching the rod above her head,

brings her whole weight on her iron lever. In the furnace rises a volcano of flame, followed by a subsidence, and then a heavy fall of red-hot coal to the bed of ashes beneath. In the sheet of liquid flame there is a break—a bar had fallen.

Then another, and another, and another. The rod has grown red-hot and bends.

“Four are out. The rod is red,” she cries down the well.

“Cool it in the tank outside.”

She dashes out and returns in a moment with the hissing and smoking iron in her hand.

After a while she calls down once more, “They are all out but three.”

“That will do. We are saved. Sit down and rest.”

“Can I do no more?”

“No. The engine will stop of itself. Sit down and rest.”

Then she fainted.

\* \* \* \* \*

“When I was shot down the well,” said William Lee, explaining to Fred Merrick on Monday, as he was coming back from identifying Wood, the tramp, and his coat, and the brown-paper bag in which the money had been found save a sovereign and a half, “I caught the rods of the plungers in both arms, and before I knew

where I was, found myself stopped by the head of the pump—that's forty feet down. The rods broke my fall so that I was not much hurt, though a good deal shaken. I tried half a dozen times to get up by the rods, but found I couldn't. They were too close together to use only one, and when I caught the two, the down stroke pushed me back faster than I could climb up. So I stood on the head of the pump, and gave myself up for lost; for I knew from the water and the fire that I had left in the engine, that the boiler must burst. Well, I can't think of it now; but you know how she came, and knocked the bars out, and fainted, and when she came to, got help. I wonder I didn't turn gray! It's her willingness to die with me, more than her saving my life, that breaks me down. I feel *that* nearly too much to bear. God bless her!"

## CHARLESTON'S GENTLEMAN.

BY AMELIA E. BARR.

In sunny Carolina sits fair Charleston by the sea;  
Famed are her sons for gracious hearts and deeds  
of chivalry;

But there was one brave gentleman—I would I  
knew his name—

Who plucked his spurs from death's white hand,  
and 'mid the smoke and flame

Stood up between high heaven and earth, the  
hero of "the fire,"

The savior of the city, when he saved St.  
Michael's spire.

For 'mid her thousand homes it stood, and each  
home had its share

In the chiming bells, that set themselves to many  
a hope and prayer;

That sent the ships and men away with "God  
speed" in their tone,

And when the homeward bound drew near, rang  
out a "Welcome Home!"

Whose service bells bade old and young hear what  
the preacher said,

And blessed the bridal as it passed, and tolled  
above the dead.

But the fairest homes in Charleston were now in  
smoke and flame;

And onward like a sea of fire the burning tempest  
came;

The hot, thick air around the church was full of  
blazing brands,

That smote the spire as they were flung by cruel,  
fiendish hands;

While the city fathers council took within the  
crowded Square,

How they should shield the homeless poor, and  
save the house of prayer.

And as, with anxious eyes, they watched the  
brands of living fire,  
One, flung with fierce and fateful force, alighted  
on the spire,  
Far, far above the reach of those who kept the  
roof for love,  
But saw with failing hearts their foe, the dizzy  
height above;  
While through the tumult and the cries the  
Mayor's voice rose higher—  
"Charleston hath love and gold for him who saves  
St. Michael's spire!"

Then from the band upon the roof a gentleman  
stepped out,  
And the watching city poured her heart in one  
triumphant shout;  
But as he slowly, painfully toiled up the daring  
height,  
A speechless awe sealed every lip—and in the  
ruddy light  
The white, wan faces lifted up, made such a piteous  
prayer,  
That the good angels knew their hour, and swiftly  
hasted there.

They held the weary clinging feet, each foot  
within a palm,  
They made the fingers strong as brass—his prayer  
turned to a psalm  
That gladder grew as on he went his dim and  
perilous way,  
Until he grasped the burning brand and flung it  
far away.  
Then men looked in each other's eyes, but not a  
word was said,  
Until the band upon the roof received alive their  
dead,

His face all glowing with the light of that bright  
 Border Land  
 Where mortals in diviner hours touch the Im-  
 mortal Hand.  
 And then rung out the strong glad shout, while  
 at St. Michael's gates,  
 A surging crowd, with plaudits loud, upon the  
 Hero waits.

None of thy brave young sons, that boast their  
 noble race and name,  
 None of thy cultured citizens, with strong nerve  
 and clear brain,  
 No soldier from the garrison did this grace unto<sup>o</sup>  
 thee;  
 No sailor trained to wondrous feats upon the rest-  
 less sea.—  
 The man who perilled life and limb fair Charles-  
 ton's homes to save  
 Stood up among the lieges there—a black man  
 and a slave.

They made him free with wild acclaim, and for  
 a moment's space,  
 They saw the naked, noble soul—not the black  
 human face.  
 His heart touched theirs with mighty power,  
 "the right divine of Can."\*  
 He was no longer Charleston's slave, but Charles-  
 ton's gentleman;  
 The sacred, secret Hand of God had given him  
 place and fame.  
 Would that I knew the shining signs with which  
 to spell his name!

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\*"*Can* and *Ken* rule the world."—*Carlyle*.

## CONTENT.

BY AMELIA E. BARR.

She sat under the mulberry trees, gazing into the west, an old woman, with a look still and passionless, and large, calm eyes, telling a tale of sacrifice.

"And you are happy now?" I inquired.

"I did not say 'happy,' child,—I said 'content.'"

"Well, that is something."

"Everything,"—and just here Queen, a negress, "black but comely," came to tell us that supper was ready. So we went into the great, rambling log-house, which was chiefly remarkable for its total lack of windows and its ever-open doors. Some fragrant cedar boughs were blazing and crackling in the wide chimney, and a dozen negro babies rolled and tumbled over the earthen floor. A stranger was sitting on the steps, smoking. He rose as we entered, and, with a politeness oddly at variance with his rude garments, bowed to my companion.

"I am hunting some lost stock, madam, and your driver told me I could have food and shelter here to-night."

"Surely, sir," she answered, "my doors stand open night and day; all travelers are welcome."

"Thank you. I come from Comal, and am"——

"I do not wish to know, sir. Indeed, I make a point of not knowing anything about my guests. The habit has saved myself and others a great deal of trouble."

The young man laughed appreciatively, and we then sat down to supper. It was a meal of rough plenty, to which forest, farm and river had contributed, with coffee of that rare excellence which only Southern negroes know how to make. Very soon after it, every one on the place was fast asleep; but I, accustomed to much later hours, was made intensely wakeful by the unnatural quiet and palpable presence of so much still life around me. I cautiously left my room, which was exceedingly warm, and went back to the main apartment. A big negro, wrapped in a blanket, lay at the stranger's door, another at madam's, and several of all ages were asleep around the blazing fire, or in the corners out of the line of moonlight, which lay like a broad silver ribbon from door to door. I threw a large scarlet serape around me, and sat down on the steps which faced the river. Its calm, even flow in that deep peace blended audibly with the breathing of the sleepers around me. Such a lonely place! Such solemnly shaded depths! Such a soft, slumberous Lotus Land! It seemed to me

as if I were sitting there in a sleep, and the story madam had told me were its dream. The dream of a soul fighting life at strange odds, of great powers and infinite love denied their proper arena, of a wasted life, many would have said; and yet she was content.

That she had opened her heart to me involved no personal compliment. It was the result of one of those strange moods in which the soul breaks down all barriers of self-imposed reticence; and, hungering for human sympathy, begs it of the first kindly heart it meets. I had asked her of her early youth; but here my curiosity was defeated. "Let that pass," she answered; "it had not the slightest connection with the life I now lead; it is so long ago, and so far away, I have forgotten it. With renunciation life begins, and when I was nineteen I gave up all that those years had brought me for one I loved."

"And was the sacrifice worthily offered?"

"I think so. Now that those fitful, feverish years are over, and the injured soul is at peace with God, I think so. And to me he was always good and noble; his quarrel was with the world."

"A powerful foe, if he met it single-handed."

"Yes; and when he could not conquer, and would not yield, I counseled flight;

that is how we came first to these solitudes. The first year, a few miserable Tonkaways, or an occasional hunter, was all the company we had. But my husband's skill and daring, and his jovial reckless temper, soon became known; so, gradually, a small band of men gathered around us. They commenced a trade in horses and cattle, which took them very often to the shores of the Rio Grande, and again within the limits of the larger settlements. I was compelled either to accompany them, or else remain alone with my child in that small log house you see under the live oak. I chose the former, and soon became an expert horse-woman and a fine shot, while my influence was even greater than my husband's. But it was a wild and terrible existence. Heat and cold, hunger and thirst, prowling savages and venomous reptiles, made life a continuous strife and warfare. But for my husband's and my boy's love, I should have prayed to die; you look at me, but I did pray then. Ah, yes! believe me, when life fronts death, prayer is the soul's native tongue; and in these expeditions we lived almost from hour to hour. Nor must you imagine either that my companions were utterly godless. Men are not divided in this world into sheep and goats; there are many gradations of good and evil. I wish you could have witnessed the hush which

fell over the noisiest groups around the camp-fire, when my little boy came to my knee to say his evening prayer. I am sure the angels carried heavenward many an 'Amen' to his 'Our Father.' And it comforts me to think that that fair, sinless child, kneeling with clasped hands in the midst of those wild, rough men, may have been God's evangel to them."

"And the boy now?" I asked.

"Is in heaven. When he was five years old, we went to Corpus Christi with a drove of horses, and 'Death took him away.'"

"How?"

"The vomito. Two of the men took it first, and I went to nurse and pray with them in their last hours; when I came back, my boy was dying. Do you know what it is to turn back into the world again from a new-made grave? Life suddenly became to me a simple weight, and I begged to go home. What did I care that we had made much gold? I was a poor woman that day. So the company was broken up, most of the men going on to Matamoras, while my husband and I returned here. But it was impossible for him to rest. He speedily organized a band of rangers to go to the Comanche country for six months, leaving me to manage the farm and the servants we had bought. I employed myself in superintending the enclosing of more land

and the planting of a garden. Thus I worked hard all day, and every evening I sat an hour under these trees, and by prayer and communion with God strove to reach after the peace of my childhood. In less than three months I was content."

"Content," I said, "with your husband fighting the Comanche, and your only child in his grave! Resigned, you mean."

"No; I mean what I say. Don't you see that if God is sufficient for all heaven, he may easily suffice for one poor soul?"

"Christmas eve being a holiday, the negroes were laughing and making a great noise. Not wishing to interfere with their sports, I moved further down the creek for my hour's meditation, to where you see yon grove of magnolias. I had hardly sat down, however, before I heard a man's voice talking to oxen, but it sounded strangely to me, for certainly there were tears in it. I looked cautiously round the bushes, and saw him unyoking the beasts. I saw, too, that he frequently drew his sleeve across his eyes, as if to wipe away blinding tears. I do not mind women's tears much, but to see this bearded man weeping in secret moved me strangely. I went round and approached him from a quarter by which my coming could be seen in advance. He came rapidly to meet me, and before I could speak, gently lifted a

blanket and showed me his dead wife, with a little girl asleep beside her. With a woman's instinct, I lifted the child into my breast and wrapped my shawl around it. The mother had died that afternoon in the wagon. She had been long sick, and her husband was moving her from the lower country to these higher lands, hoping to restore her health. Next day my servants dug a grave under the magnolias, and I read aloud there to the weeping husband the glorious words of the burial service. Afterwards I talked with him, and found that he was going still sixty miles further west to pre-empt some land on the San Antonio River. So I begged that the little girl might be left with me, and he gratefully acceded to my wish. For four years he wrote me regularly, and then I never heard any more of him, and so the little Magnolia, as I had called her, became all mine."

Here I looked the question I did not like to ask, and she smiled and said, "Oh, she is married, now! that is her house you see across the cotton patch.

"My husband did not return so soon as I expected, and when he came he brought with him two white boys whom he had taken from the Indians. It was supposed they were brothers, but the children remembered nothing but a weary life of

slavery and ill-usage, and it seemed to me as if I could never do enough to atone for all those days of suffering. Perhaps I was too indulgent; God knows, I meant it all for the best. And now arose a great difficulty in my mind. I could see that my husband, from associating entirely with men every way reckless, was becoming as bad as his companions. I noticed, too, that many little gentlemanly habits that had clung to him in every change of fortune had been abandoned. For the first time I saw him drunk. Wishita, one of the Indian boys, told me that 'the Captain much so every day,' and my heart sunk like lead before the future this indicated. But if I resumed my nomadic life, would I be able to save him? And then there were the three children and over twenty servants dependent on my planning and forethought. For nearly three years I vibrated between the two, leading a life of toil and care that is terrible to remember. At length even this became impossible; I could no longer watch over him, but I could pray; and so henceforward I fought the battle on my knees.

"Seven more years passed. Wealth from a most unexpected source came to me. My father on his deathbed gave me his long delayed pardon, and my share of the inheritance. It came as most earthly bless-

ings come, too late. I looked at the tender words, but they lost their force traveling through the long years of neglect, freighted with the wrecks of what 'might have been'—and that gold! Ah, if it had come a few years sooner! We never need have been here, my husband's life might have been so different; my child need not have died. God knows whether then it would have done all this, but now it was such a mockery. After this I was frequently urged to leave my husband to the lawless life he had chosen, and come home again."

"But I am sure you never would have done that."

"No; I never felt the least desire. 'A respectable life and white servants' (which were the chief inducements offered) never for a moment tempted me; besides I had been praying for seven years, I was not going to run away from my answer. How did I know but that it was near 'the day-breaking,' and that very soon the angel would ask me, 'What is thy name?' "

"And the answer came?"

"Yes, it came, not as I had hoped, but I know now it was best so. One night my love returned, sober and in his right mind. His comings home had always been a jubilee to the children and servants. Far off they knew his furious gallop, his hearty laugh and cheery voice. Before his horse

was well in the yard there would be a little crowd around him—then it was one leap out of his saddle—another leap up the steps, and a passionate embrace, in which I pardoned at once all the hours of care and misery he had given me. But this time he came so slowly and quietly that no one was aware of it until I raised my head and saw him standing, watching me. We looked into each other's eyes as he held me to his heart, and then we both knew that he had come home to die. It may seem strange to you, but the hours in which I walked with him to the grave were the very happiest of both our lives. And God was good to us, and lengthened the days into weeks, and the weeks into months. A great change came over him; but I can't describe it, for 'the kingdom of God cometh not with observation'—only I know that for him and me that miracle of condescension was renewed, and again 'Jesus was guest in the house of a man that was a sinner.' I see your eyes are pitying me for the inevitable parting—but you need not. Have I not the priceless memories of those last days? Of *the* last one? We watched together its first faint beginnings, over the 'happy autumn fields;' the dim dawn came, loud with the voice of birds, the tinkling bells of cattle and the voices of the servants; but we heard them as in a dream. In the room of

my dying love there was a peace that might be felt; only a sound as of wings, stirred the still air. Death, whom he had so often met as a foe, now waited as a friend for him, and when the sun was setting they went away together. 'Good-by, darling,' I whispered, and he waved his hand in his old joyous way, and called out clearly, 'Good-by, Mary, I shall be waiting for you'—and so my watch was over."

"And he has been waiting twenty years, you said?"

"Yes. But what is twenty years on the dial of heaven? And my work was not finished—there were Maggie and the boys, and at least a dozen other 'unmothered' children who have since been sent to me to help and succor. Some of these have done well, they brought their recompense in their hands with them; others have caused me many hours of anxiety and many bitter tears—but all are God's by prayer and promise. They are scattered far and near. One of my own boys (that is one of the boys my husband took from the Indians) is with my brother in Scotland. It was a great opening for him; but he is proud and restive under authority, and I should not be astonished any day to see him at home. And I shall not scold him, although perhaps I ought to do, when I feel his kiss on my cheek and hear him

say, 'Dear old marmy, I could not stay from you any longer.' I shall pardon him all his extravagances, and all his wasted opportunities, and just order the best robe to be brought and the fatted calf to be killed. I know I shall. His brother is a true Ishmaelite, and is now out with his company of Rangers protecting the San Saba country. I have another boy at sea, and another in the legislature, and the others—well, God knows all about them. Five daughters, including Maggie, are married, and when I count my grandchildren I have to use two figures. Besides, I love my servants, every one of them—I have not a bad one—and their babies are mine too."

I could not help smiling. "The maternal instinct must be very strong in your heart," I said.

"Yes. The sweet child who shared with me those wild five years of desert life stirred it into existence. Being divine, it could not die with him; every little helpless child is a fresh incarnation of my own; and so, though I am a desolate woman in one sense, without a husband and without a child, yet when I come to die they may write this of me, 'A mother who had no children, but whom many children regretted.' And with this I am content."

This was the story which hallowed the rude log house and made it a sanctuary. I

thought of it till sleep came over me. With my head on my arm, and my arm on the upper step, I rested calmly and sweetly. When I awoke, that most touching of nature's spectacles, the waning moon, was just dropping behind the trees; and I knew by the chill, damp air, and the piping of the half awakened birds, that morning was not far off. In that delicious climate I often slept out of doors after this, but this was my first night under "the canopy of heaven."

Eleven years afterward, I passed the log house again. Once more we sat and watched the setting sun, and talked of the changes those years had brought. She was then feeble and sore broken, nearing her west rapidly, but still (though much impoverished and bereaved by the war) cheerful and content. "My cup of life is drunk nearly to the lees," she said, "but, very soon now, God shall fill it with the vintage of heaven."

## THE LAST SHEAF.

BY AMELIA E. BARR.

'Mid the brown-haired, and the black-haired men,  
With ruddy faces aglow,  
The old man stood in the harvest field,  
With a head as white as snow.  
"Let me cut a sheaf, my boys," he said,  
"Before it is time to go."

They put the sickle within his hands,  
He bowed to the windy wheat;  
Pleasantly fell the golden ears,  
With the corn flowers at his feet.  
He lifted a handful thoughtfully,  
It was ripe, and full, and sweet.

"Many, and many, a sheaf," he said,  
"I have cut in the years gone past;  
And many, and many, a sheaf, these arms  
On the harvest wains have cast.  
But, children dear, I am weary now;  
And I think this is—the last."

"Let me rest awhile beneath the tree,  
For I like to watch you go,  
With sickles bright through the ripe, full wheat;  
And to feel the fresh wind blow."  
And they spread their working coats for him,  
'Mid the grasses sweet, and low.

When the sun grew high they came again  
For a drink, and their bread and meat;  
And in the shadows he sleeping lay,  
With the sunshine on his feet.  
Like a child at night outspent with play,  
He lay in slumber sweet.

When they came again, he faintly said—

“I have crossed the meadow-stile—

My work is done—’tis nearly dark,

I shall rest in a little while.”

That night it was *harvest-home* with him,

But he went away with a smile!

## ENEMIES.

They had been rivals at school! They had loved the same woman, and they hated one another! But they went together to the camp, together to the trenches, together to the assault. They were alone together at the broken summit of the wall. There was rivalry, as well as courage, in their deadly struggle with those that opposed them.

They were together in the triumph, they planted the flag upon the wall, and fell together, while it waved over them in ribbons.

They gazed into each other's eyes, and they knew they were to be together in death!

They crawled to one another, and kissed almost with their last strength; and then each crawled away, that the body of his "enemy" might be found nearer the victorious standard than his own, and that he might have the honor.

They were too near death to go far, and the banner waved over both!

## THE COMING OF THE LORD.

BY MARY BRADFORD WHITING.

It was the stillest time of all the week—twelve o'clock on Sunday morning, and though a hundred chimneys were pouring out their smoke a few miles off, the air of Dursmoor was calm and clear. Most of the inhabitants of the village were at church or chapel, as the case might be, but a few lounging figures were to be seen smoking quiet pipes of contemplation while the Sunday dinner was preparing at home.

Mat Derry the miner held aloof from all. Between the miners and the villagers a sharp line of demarcation was drawn; the miners lived and died to themselves, and the villagers looked on them as of another race altogether.

Among the miners also there was a mark of division: some of them washed their faces on Sunday, and some did not. Mat Derry belonged to the latter class. He was so accustomed to his black face that he would have felt like a snail without a shell if it had been deprived of its outer coating; the most he ever did was to rub it with his neck-handkerchief, out of compliment to his weekly holiday.

He was a picturesque figure, notwithstanding, as he came slowly down the

street leading his dog by a string. His blue cotton stockings and loose flannel trousers cut short at the knee had a quaint effect, and the clumsy make of his jacket could not conceal the fine proportions of his shoulders. There was a look of power about him, in spite of all his disadvantages, and among his own people there were many who regarded him with admiring eyes.

And yet, even among his own people, Mat lived a solitary life. Why he did so no one exactly knew, for he had never transgressed the miners' code of morals. It is true that he frequently drank too much and fought savagely with those who crossed his drunken humor; it is true also that most of the money which he did not waste in drink he wasted in gambling; but none of these things were sins in the eyes of his mates, and it was not for such as these that he was denied the rights of social equality.

The reason probably lay more in Mat's disposition than in any outward circumstances of his life. He had no wish to make friends, for he preferred to go his own way, and he made short work with anyone who attempted to interfere with him. But though all this was eminently satisfactory to himself, it had one great drawback—a drawback that he had not foreseen when he first adopted it: if he

should ever wish to live on more friendly terms with his fellow-creatures, he had hedged up his way with an impassable barrier!

For some months now Mat Derry had been longing to undo the work of the past. To the casual observer Annie Norris was no more than any other comely North Country lass; but to Mat she was the flower of the world. He had known her ever since she was a tiny, toddling child, but he had never taken any notice of her, one way or the other, until one eventful day when he had met her going down to the well, her yellow hair all aflame with the setting sun, and with a sudden feeling that was like a strange birth within his breast, he had lifted her pail on his shoulder and carried it to her door.

It was a moment of bliss, but a bliss that he had to pay dearly for. Such an unwonted act on his part was certain to arouse the keenest interest in all who witnessed it, and amid a chorus of jokes and jeers he slunk away, feeling that he could never show his face again. But love is stronger than pride, as many a man has found out before now, and again and again Mat ran the gauntlet of the neighbors and made his way to Annie's house. If he had lived in the miners' hamlet his visits would have been less noticeable, but for many

years past he had held the post of watchman at a disused colliery—a wild and desolate spot at more than a mile's distance.

Mat had risen from his bed on this Sunday morning with the fixed resolve that he would not go and see Annie Norris. It was bad enough to be laughed at by the neighbors, but when in addition he was made the butt of keen, pointed jests by Annie herself, it was more than flesh and blood could stand.

And yet, strange to say, no sooner was his meal concluded and his hut put tidy, than Mat found himself unconsciously taking the road that led to the hamlet; but though a frown crossed his brow he did not turn back, and presently his face cleared as he remembered that he had to ask a question of Jonas Bell, a man who lived not far from the Norris's house, and who acted as referee for the miners' dog-races.

Of course it was to see Jonas that he was coming. That Annie lived near by was only a coincidence; and, having thus justified himself, Mat walked on, briskly whistling a tune as he went.

But when he reached the hamlet it was to Annie's house that he made his way, even though he saw Jonas standing at his door, the centre of an eager group. He guessed that they were discussing the forthcoming race, and his eye glanced lovingly

at his dog, Jock, as it strained at the leash; but, for all that, he turned a corner that they might not see him, and came by the back way to John Norris's door.

The house was cleaner than most of those that surrounded it; there were curtains in the windows, and a geranium or two gleamed brightly through the pane. Poor though it was, there was a look of home about it that touched a chord in Mat's heart; his step grew quicker, and at the sound of a merry peal of laughter his face lighted up with a smile. It was Annie's laugh, and he would have known it among a thousand.

But as he looked through the open door his mood changed suddenly, and his smile was succeeded by a scowl. There on the settle sat Annie, her hair elaborately arranged and a smart lace collar encircling her neck; while just behind her, leaning over her and trying to take a flower from her unwilling fingers, was Jonas Bell's son, Angus—a slightly-made young man with a refined face and a well-cut tweed suit.

"Come, Annie," he said, "what's the use of saying me nay for a bit of a flower when you've just told me that you love me with all your heart?"

Angus Bell had rubbed off some of his rusticities in a merchant's office in the neighboring city and in the cashier's office

in the colliery, and his town-bred speech always struck hatefully upon Mat's jealous ear; but such words as these would have set fire to his passions in whatever accent they had been spoken, and with one stride he cleared the threshold and stood before the astonished pair.

"Say that again, if you dare!" he cried, in tones of thunder.

Women are proverbially more self-possessed under such circumstances than men; but on this occasion Angus stood unmoved, while Annie started to her feet in angry surprise.

"How dare you come pryin' in at other folks' doors wi' your black face?" she exclaimed. "You're not fit for decent folks to speak to."

Mat looked at her as if petrified; he had never had such words addressed to him before, and his vanity was as sorely wounded as though he had been a ball-room beauty. To be dirty and rough had never been any disadvantage in his eyes, but for the first time a hot glow of shame rushed over him as he looked at Angus Bell's white hands and spotless collar.

But before he could recover himself his rival stepped forward and took up the word.

"I'm sorry for you, Mat," he said; "but Annie has just promised herself to me."

He was not much more than a lad, but there was a straightforward look in his face and a frankness in his manner that entitled him to respect; yet, all the same, if Annie had not been there Mat would have knocked him down, and it was only some dim idea of reverence towards the woman he loved that made him turn on his heel and walk away.

The interview had only lasted a few moments, and Jonas and his friends were still deep in their discussion, but Mat hurried off as fast as he could; he felt certain that he should never care for a dog-race again.

His mind was shaken by a storm of passion as he left the hamlet behind him and made his way towards the village. His grief at Annie's rejection of him was keen, but there was a personal pain which at the moment hurt him even more. He had always thought that the neighbors admired him for the surly solitude of his life; but now the veil of his self-delusion seemed suddenly to have been rent in twain. No matter what his own opinion of himself might be, in Annie's eyes he was rough, unwashed, and ignorant; and the revelation was as strange as it was bitter.

He sauntered heavily along, his head bent, and his eyes fixed on the ground; but by-and-by he saw a group coming along

the road on their way from church, and he turned into a bit of waste land that lay behind the houses that he might avoid them. It was a quiet and secluded place. A shaggy black goat was cropping the grass on the slope, and a few stray cocks and hens were hunting for their dinner; but otherwise it was untenanted, and, seating himself on a bit of broken fence, Mat began to chew the cud of his thoughts.

It was no pleasant occupation, and if he had not been too spiritless to move he would soon have gone on in search of something more enlivening; but as he moved uneasily on his seat, his eye rested on a placard pasted on the wooden wall of a shed, and he got up listlessly and began to read it:

**"THE COMING OF THE LORD!**

"A Testimony of Impending Judgment will be declared on Sunday, August 15, at 7 p. m., on this Green, by an Evangelist of the Word."

Mat spelt it through without much difficulty. August 15? That was this very Sunday! It might while away an idle hour to come and hear the preacher.

Although religion had been devoid of effect upon Mat's life, he was not without some dim knowledge of the subject. He had a faint remembrance of lessons that

had been taught him in his childhood, and though the name of the Lord whose coming was thus announced had never passed his lips except by way of blasphemy, he knew that it was the name of the Son of God.

Religious meetings had always been a weariness of the flesh to Mat, and he had never darkened the doors of a church or chapel since his boyhood; but to-day he was conscious of a new feeling, an inward want and ache that made him as suddenly helpless as though he had been stricken down with physical illness, and snatches of things long since forgotten haunted his brain with strange persistency.

Yet to all outward appearance Mat was still the same rough, unkempt specimen of humanity, and there were several who glanced coldly at him when he took his stand among the little group assembled on the green that evening. The sun was sloping down towards the west, and its rays lit up the scene with vivid intensity. A few men and women, respectably clad, stood waiting with calm enjoyment for the treat to come; behind these were a ring of lads and girls who laughed and joked among themselves, and behind these again some small children ran noisily up and down, chasing a stray dog that had come out to see what was going on, and teasing the old

black goat that still cropped steadily away at the short tufts of grass.

Mat had time more than once to wish himself safely at home, for the assembly was small and the preacher seemed in no hurry to begin; but at last a hymn was given out, and as the people joined in with true North Country zeal, he forgot his weariness and lifted up his voice with the best.

As soon as the last strain had died away, the preacher stood up on a convenient log of wood and began to speak. "Brethren," he said, "I have to testify to you to-night of the coming of the Lord."

As the words fell from his lips silence crept over the little group before him, the grown-up people pressed nearer, and the boys and girls ceased their laughter. There was something in his voice that chained their attention at once, and as his dark eyes glanced quickly round they seemed to pierce through each soul before him. In unpolished but eloquent language he painted the picture of the impending judgment: the trumpet sound, the rent rocks, the open graves, the great white throne, the trembling multitudes awaiting their doom! His eyes glowed and his pale face kindled as he poured out his words; then, lowering his voice, he exclaimed in solemn accents: "Before the sun rises again His

coming may be fulfilled! Brethren, how shall you and I stand before His judgment-seat?"

A pause followed his question, and several of the audience shivered uneasily and drew a little closer together; there was a power about the man that awed them in spite of themselves, and it would hardly have surprised them if at that moment they had seen the heavens opened and the Son of Man coming in His glory.

But while they waited, the preacher's voice was heard again. "How you will meet Christ then, my friends, depends on how you meet Him now in your daily lives. Perhaps some of you will reply, 'I never have met Him!' But when we stand before His throne, He will say to you then, as I say to you now in His name, 'Did you never meet a little child? Did, you never meet a sick man, or a feeble, tottering woman? Did you never meet a sufferer you could heal, a mourner you could comfort, or an enemy that you could bless? If you met any one of these, in that disguise you met Me, the Christ of God, and as you turned away your face from them, so I turn away My face from you.' Ah! my friends, it will be too late then for you to go back and do the deeds that you have left undone all along your path; there will be no more opportunities for you when the doom is

sounding in your ears: 'Depart from Me, I never knew you!'"

His voice rang through the gathering twilight with a world of anguish in its tones, and again the people shuddered as they listened. He was silent for a moment; then, leaning forward, he held out his hands to them and broke out into passionate entreaty.

"But there is time, brethren; there is time now for you and for me. Now, before the night falls, come to Him for pardon and for peace, and then go out to meet Him along your path of life. Is there one here who has never helped the poor, the sick, and the sorrowful? Let him begin to-day! Is there one who has an unforgiven enemy? Let him go in Christ's strength and hold out his hand to him——"

There was a movement on the outskirts of the crowd, but the people were too absorbed to notice that the miner had slipped away. Nor would they have been surprised if they had seen his departure; their only wonder would have been that he had stayed so long listening to what he could not possibly understand.

But Mat had not only listened, he had understood, and the arrow of conviction had gone deep down into his heart. At another time he would have heard unmoved, as he had done before, but to-night

he was softened by love and grief, and as the preacher's words fell upon his ear he knew that they were meant for him; had he not an unforgiven enemy, whom only that morning he had longed to kill?

But though he recognized the fact of his guilt, he was not yet ready to prove his repentance. He did not show any symptoms of sudden conversion by rushing off to the miners' hamlet, seeking out Angus Bell and imploring his pardon. On the contrary, he strode rapidly homewards, looking more dogged and sullen than ever; and, far from blessing his enemy, he muttered execrations upon him between his teeth because it seemed necessary to make peace with him!

The August moon shone in the sky, bright and burning, as Mat reached his desolate home. The disused mine was a wild place at all times, but under the rays of the moonlight it seemed like some nightmare vision. Heaps of red earth and loose shale surrounded it on all sides, and as these were surmounted it lay beneath like some city of the dead. The huge machinery of the mine still stood erect over the pit mouth, the iron rusted and the wood broken and decayed, with rotten ropes and swaying chains that creaked with a ghostly sound as the night wind swept by. The buildings round were ruined and roofless,

except for one long line of sheds which were kept in repair and used for the storage of coal.

Thousands of pounds had been lost when the water broke into Northdown mine, and thousands more might have followed if any attempt had been made to pump it out. But the engineers had decreed that it would only be money thrown away, and so a new shaft had been sunk at some little distance and new machinery set up, while the old was left to fall to pieces. But though most of the coal was sent away straight from the pit's mouth, a certain quantity was kept in reserve, and as the owners were glad to be saved the cost of erecting new sheds, it was brought down in trucks on the wagon-way that ran between the two mines.

It was for this reason that a watchman was wanted, to prevent theft of the coal from the storehouses, and, as has been said, the loneliness of the position only made it more attractive in Mat's eyes. He had been familiar with the mine from his youth, and he would have laughed at anyone who had suggested that there was cause for fear in the fact that at night he was the only human being in the place.

But to-night, for the first time, Mat's eyes were opened to his surroundings, and a sensation of something like fear fell upon him as he crossed the uneven ground that

led up to his little hut. The shattered cross-beams seemed to point at him with angry fingers, and the creaking chains to utter a stern reproach. He was glad to shut himself inside and to receive the glad welcome of Jock, who had been left to keep guard during his absence.

But, though he might fasten his door, he could not shut out the uneasy thoughts that filled his brain; he had never before known what it was to court sleep in vain, but to-night he tossed restlessly to and fro, and was thankful when the first streaks of dawn shone through his uncurtained window.

Mat's work during the day was to unload the trucks of coal that were brought from the Westdown colliery, and with the help of a gang of men to stow it away in the sheds. One of those who worked with him was Jonas Bell, and the sight of him was not calculated to ease the rejected lover's mind. But it was evident that Bell's thoughts were far enough away from his son's affairs; his mind was full of some engrossing matter, and no sooner did he find himself out of earshot of the rest than he drew Mat aside and began to speak in a hurried whisper.

"Where wer' ye yesterday?" he asked. "We looked for ye up an' doon, an' couldna' find ye. Ther' was wark on han'."

"What wark?" asked Mat, not because he

cared to know, but because he did not wish to provoke Bell's questions by appearing indifferent.

Jonas drew him a little further out of sight, behind one of the great heaps of shale, and proceeded to unfold his story. There had been much dissatisfaction lately with Mr. Moore, the manager of the mine; he was believed to have made false reports about the men so as to curry favor with the owners, and the time had come at last when revenge was to be taken. Every now and then he was bound to pay a visit of inspection to the disused colliery, and though he was supposed to take the watchman by surprise, one or other of the men generally discovered his intention and gave warning of his coming.

It was known by some of them that the next night would see him on his round of duty, and it had been arranged that a picked band of men should be in hiding. "Not to hurt him precisely, ye understan'," concluded Jonas, "but just to gi' him a lesson."

He paused, expecting to receive Mat's ready approval, but to his surprise it was not forthcoming.

Mat, to speak truth, was in a sore dilemma; if it was right to forgive one's enemies, it certainly must be wrong to revenge one's-self on them. But, on the

other hand, it required more moral courage than he was as yet possessed of to make any declaration of his new feelings on the subject.

"If it's done here, it'll be my duty to prevent it," he said at last.

"Oh, ay! Think o' none but yoursel'!" broke out Jonas in deep-mouthed indignation. "Ye think the blame'll fall on your own head, and ye'll lose your place."

"I think o' no such thing!" exclaimed Mat, "and ye've no call—" His words were interrupted by the sound of footsteps near them, and Bell signed to him to be silent.

"Gi' me your answer t' morrer," he said, and, turning instantly away, he went on with his work.

The problem left for Mat to solve was no easy one: either he must make himself hated forever by his mates or he must do violence to his newly-awakened conscience.

Like many another in such a difficulty, he deferred his decision to a more convenient opportunity, and his thoughts soon drifted back to his own concerns. In spite of the evidence of his eyes and ears, he could not believe that he had lost all chance of winning Annie's love, and no sooner was his day's work done than he found himself setting out once more along the familiar road. If only he could discover that the

incident of yesterday had been nothing but a jest, how changed the face of all the world would be to him, and how easy would it be to forgive Angus Bell!

He quickened his steps involuntarily at the thought, and in a short time he stood at John Norris's door: in another minute Annie would appear, with her gay greeting and her sunshiny smile, and all this misery would fade away like a dream.

But, instead of Annie, it was her mother who came to the door—a withered old crone who had worked underground in her time, and who bore the traces of it in her bent figure and parchment-colored face.

“‘Tis Annie thou’rt lookin’ for, I ken well eno’,” she mumbled out when she saw who her visitor was; “an’ it’s Annie thou’lt not find! She’s oot wi’ her lad to-night; ther’s na coomfort t’ be got oot o’ t’ lasses when t’ lads coom after ‘em. She’d better by far ha’ taken up wi’ a decent man like yoursel’, an’ so I told her, but she wouldna’ hearken to me, not for months back.”

Mat turned and walked off without a word of answer; for months back, then, Annie had been listening to Angus Bell while she seemed to lend a kindly ear to his own tale of love. She was a deceiver, like all the rest, and a bitter smile crossed his lips as he remembered his resolutions of yesterday; who could expect a man to for-

give when he was called on to endure such provocation as this?

"Ay, ay, they be a' senseless together when they coom t' courtin'," said the old woman as she sat down again to her interrupted cup of tea; "but they mun gae through wi' it, so it's poor wark fashin'." And in this comfortable belief she let poor Mat and his troubles slide from her memory.

But Mat's grief was no every-day woe of the world to him; it was a wild and pressing pain that could not be forgotten for a moment, and the mood in which he went out to his work next morning was a despairing and almost a savage one. It was evidently useless to try and do right; his good resolves had been unheard in heaven, and therefore he would forget them as completely as though they had never been made.

"I'm ready," was all he said to Jonas, but it was enough.

"Ten o'clock," was the whispered response; "six of us told off to do t' job."

What the "job" was to be Mat did not clearly know, and he did not care to inquire. In his present state of mind he was glad of anything on which to wreak his wrath, and he was ready for whatever the evening might bring.

The weather had changed during the

day, and as if it knew that some dark deed was on foot, the wind had risen and was blowing up heavy clouds from the west. There was a feeling in the air as of coming storms, and now and again a few drops of rain fell sullenly to the earth.

The hour came at last for knocking off work, and Mat was left alone in the colliery. He spun out his evening meal to as great a length as possible, and whistled loudly as he gave Jock an ample supper and tied him up in the inner room out of harm's way. But all the while the uneasy feeling in his mind grew stronger and stronger, and his hand shook as he opened his little casement window and looked out into the night. The shadows were falling more and more darkly as the clouds crept up over the sky, and there was a wail in the wind that made Mat shudder, though he had heard the same sound a hundred times before. He closed the window hastily, and was just returning to seek refuge in Jock's company when a low knock at the door made the drops start to his forehead.

"I'm a fool, a big fool!" he muttered to himself as he drew back the bolt and peered out.

A man was just visible, standing in the shadow; he did not emerge, but whispered a few words in Mat's ear.

"We're waitin' under t' sheds: see he cooms round that way."

Mat nodded and closed the door again; now that the time for action had come, he was able to crush down his fears, and, taking his hat and stick, he set out upon his rounds.

All was quiet, except for the wind which moaned through the ruined buildings like an unquiet spirit, and touched Mat's forehead with a chilly hand as it passed; he looked round anxiously, but he saw nothing as he threaded his way through the heaps of refuse and broken bits of timber.

"Well, Derry!" said the manager's voice in his ear.

Mat gave a violent start, and Mr. Moore laughed. "It's easy to see you did not expect me," he said.

A ready lie had often before risen to Mat's lips when he was supposed to be taken by surprise with a nocturnal visit, but now that it was more necessary than ever before he could not force it out, and, making an inarticulate reply, he stood aside to let the manager pass. Mr. Moore made his way straight towards the sheds, and Mat watched him with a strange sensation. Was it even now too late to interfere?

His doubts were soon set at rest, however. A group of dark figures seemed to

spring out of the earth; there was a rush, a shout, a scuffle, a fall, and then silence.

By the time Mat reached the spot the manager's eyes were blinded, his mouth gagged, and his hands and feet tied firmly together; it had all been done in the twinkling of an eye, and the men rose from the ground and stood calmly regarding their handiwork. To Mat's utter amazement he saw that one of them was Angus Bell.

All was still for a few moments, and then one of the men stepped forward and spoke. He was a great hulking fellow—Stockdale by name—well-known in the mine for his strength and brutality, and no mercy was to be expected at his hands.

"We're about t' punish ye," he said, as he looked down at the prostrate figure at his feet. "Ye deserve t' worst we can gi' ye; hangin' 's too good for ye, but we'll gi' ye a taste o' it by-and-by."

They all stooped down as he finished speaking, and, raising the helpless man in their arms, carried him to one of the highest hillocks. Mat saw at once what they meant to do; upon its summit stood a beacon, a stout beam of wood with a cross-bar, over which ran a rough pulley with an iron basket attached, in which, during the working days of the mine, a signal fire had sometimes been lighted.

To lower the rope and take off the bas-

ket was the work of a moment, and Mat heard a stifled groan from the manager as the creaking of the rusty joints told him of the fate in store for him. Stockdale took the rope and fastened it round his victim's neck.

"Now, ther' ye lie," he said. "Move or speak, an' we'll haul ye up like a cat caught thievin'."

He made a sign to the others as he spoke, and one by one they crept noiselessly away, leaving the wretched man to endure the torture of suspense as best he might.

"Now we'll sit doon and have supper," he said, when they were well away, and, leading the way to one of the ruined sheds, he lit a lantern and invited the men to share the food and drink which he had spread out on the floor.

Mat had no hesitation about sharing the meal, but yet now and again it struck him that there was something very horrible in the idea of their thus enjoying themselves while a fellow-creature lay but a few paces off enduring the extreme of mental agony. He felt himself powerless to remonstrate, but as the others ate and drank and became more excited every moment his wonder increased at the fact of Angus Bell's presence. The young man's face was pale, and his manner uneasy, and though he pre-

tended to eat and joke with the rest, it was nothing more than a pretence, as Mat soon saw. Why he should be there was hard to understand, for though he was employed in the colliery his work in the cashier's office had to great extent divided him from the miners.

Mat drew near to Stockdale at last, and put the question to him under cover of a burst of merriment. "He got wind o' what we was doin', t' yoong fool!" returned Stockdale. "We'd ha' drubbed the life half oot o' him, but we wer' afear'd o' his tellin', an' so we made him coom."

Anyone skilled in reading faces would have seen that this enforced partnership in crime was a far worse punishment to Angus than bodily pain would have been; he grew paler and paler as time went on, and though a few days ago Mat would have scoffed at him loudly, there was something in his heart now that gave him a clue to the anguish that the other was enduring.

It was long past midnight when Stockdale rose to his feet and summoned the rest to follow him. Mat was a little behind the others, and he saw that Angus was shaking from head to foot with cold and fear.

"Ye'd better ha' bided at hoom, lad," he said in a kindly voice.

Angus looked at him quickly; he had never expected to hear any words of friend-

liness from that quarter, and they touched him to the quick.

"Derry," he said, earnestly, "if I never go home again, tell my poor lass—whom I left sobbing her heart out, God help her!—that I loved her to the end."

Mat looked at him in bewilderment, but before he had time to answer a shout from the front scattered his thoughts to the wind. It was a shout of disappointment and baffled rage, and as Mat rushed forward to ascertain its meaning, he saw in the glance of an eye that their victim was gone.

There on the ground lay the bandages that had been tied round his eyes and mouth, and the freshly cut ends of rope showed that some friendly hand had set the captive free. Was this what Angus meant when he said that he might never go home alive? Mat knew only too well what a penalty would have to be paid for such interference; and even as the thought passed through his mind he heard a tumult of voices behind him, and, turning, beheld Angus in the midst of an infuriated group.

"Yoong villain that ye are!" shouted Stockdale. "We'll make ye pay for 't. How coom ye t' do it?"

He clenched his brawny fists and glared at Angus in such a frenzy of passion that

Mat expected to see the young man quail before him. He was mistaken, however; now that the moment of danger had actually arrived, Angus regained his usual composure.

"I will tell you," he said. "You brought me here against my will, and, as I was forced to come, I made up my mind to try and save you from yourselves. I knew that the day would come when you would thank me for having hindered you from your wrong-doing; so, when you left the manager under the beacon, I stayed behind while you hurried on to get your supper, and a minute was long enough to cut the ropes and set him free."

There was a dauntless courage in his voice and bearing that had its effect upon the men, inflamed though they were with drink and rage, and for a moment Mat thought that he would escape unharmed; then Stockdale's voice broke the silence.

"An' why did ye not get away with a whole skin while ther' was time?"

Something like a smile passed over Angus's face. "The manager would have had no chance of getting off unless I had stayed," he said, and Mat felt a keen sense of shame as he recognized the heroism of the lad whom he had looked down upon as being of so much weaker mould than himself.

But the rest of the men were in no mood to be touched by heroism; the savagery of their natures had been aroused, and, thwarted of their prey, they turned with double ferocity on the new victim within their grasp.

"We'll kill ye for this," said Stockdale, and striding forward, he struck Angus a blow that felled him to the earth.

"Let's hang him in place o' t' other," said one; but Stockdale answered grimly, "Drowned men tell no tales."

A despairing cry broke from Angus's lips: "Annie! Annie!" Then he was silent as death while his captors dragged him rapidly towards the shaft.

Mat heard the cry, and it brought before him a vision of her he loved with broken heart and streaming eyes; he would have given all he possessed to save Angus from his fate; but what could he do in his single strength against five desperate men? It was useless to struggle with them, and still more useless to appeal to their feelings.

They were nearing the shaft now, a horrible yawning well protected by a low stone wall; Mat had often leaned over it and dropped a stone into the black depths while he counted the seconds until he heard the dull splash below. Six hundred feet before it reached the water, and no one knew how many feet after that!

The ground was more encumbered here with heaps of refuse and rotting timber than in any other part of the colliery, and even in daylight walking was no easy matter. Twice over the men stumbled and fell with their burden, uttering curses and threats that made Mat's blood run cold. He was following them at some little distance when a thought struck him—a thought that made him pause suddenly in spite of his excitement, and stilled the rapid beating of his heart. He could not prevent the murderers from carrying out their intent, but might he not die in Angus's stead? He had thought, as he listened to the preacher, that if only Christ came to him he could give up all for His sake; had not Christ come to him now in the person of his enemy?

The idea no sooner presented itself to him than it passed into a resolve, and with perfect calmness he set himself to think how it could be carried out. It was no good to offer to take Angus's place; that would only mean two victims instead of one. He must somehow rescue him from his captors and substitute himself without their knowledge. It was no easy task; but he knew that Stockdale and the rest were half mad with the spirits that they had imbibed and with their own fury, and he felt certain that they would trouble their

heads about nothing so long as they succeeded in flinging a man into the water.

He waited quietly until he saw the group struggling up to the shaft; then, stealing close behind them, he watched his opportunity. A few steps more and they would have reached it; but, as he anticipated, their feet slipped on the loose shale that lay all around, and they fell to the ground with renewed noise and confusion. Dark as it was, Mat had his wits about him, and, feeling cautiously round, he recognized Angus by the different material of which his clothes were made, and, drawing him away from the struggling figures, he laid himself quietly down in the midst of the group.

Angus stopped neither to think nor reason; he knew nothing but that he had escaped for a moment from the cruel choking hands that were dragging him to his death, and, springing to his feet, he flew over the broken ground with steps that were winged by fear to an unnatural speed.

His captors, meanwhile, heard and noticed nothing. With shouts and blind gropings in the darkness, they regained their feet, and, seizing upon the prostrate form that lay motionless before them, they reached the wall and flung their burden over. There was a horrible silence as they stood leaning forward, their breath coming thick and fast. Six seconds they waited;

then there was a sickening thud, a splash, and all was still.

The cold grey dawn was just breaking in the east when five men might have been seen stealing away from the disused mine. Now that their fury had expended itself, they were filled with terror at the thought of what they had done; the man they had been sent to punish had escaped, while Angus Bell had been not only punished, but murdered! It was a fearful tale to have to tell, and it was little wonder that they shrank from telling it.

"Let 'em think 't was nowt but chance," said Stockdale. "'T was likely eno' in t' dark, an' if we all stan' by it, ther's none to deny it."

"But what o' Mat?" said one of the men.

"Mat kep' oot o' hearin', t' skulkin' coward, so ther's nothin' he can say aboot it."

But the dark night's work was not to be so quietly forgotten as Stockdale imagined. Angus, too, was inclined to let the matter drop; the manager had been saved, and, though he himself had had a fright, he had escaped, by great good fortune, with nothing worse. He made up his mind, therefore, that the best thing he could do was to say nothing of what had occurred; and though he still felt shaken and unnerved, he started out to his work as usual the next day.

But as he went up to the office door he heard a cry of such abject despair that it sounded in his ears like the wail of a lost spirit, and, looking round, he saw Stockdale leaning against the wall as though unable to stand, staring at him with wide-open eyes of horror.

"What is it?" he exclaimed, going towards him; but Stockdale put out both hands to fence him off; then, turning round, he rushed away as though avenging Furies were upon his track.

It was more than Angus could understand, but he had little time to brood over it, for news came thick and fast into the office that morning. Mr. Moore could not appear. There had been some mysterious affair at the Northdown mine last night; he had been set upon and beaten, and was too bruised to move; but what was more mysterious still, Mat, the watchman, could nowhere be found!

When Angus heard this last piece of news he knew that he must keep silence no longer. It was clear that, by some mistake, Mat had been thrown down the shaft in his place, and that Stockdale had been driven to desperation at the reappearance of his supposed victim. Every soul in the place was wild with excitement at his story, and the rest of the miners concerned were filled with anger and loathing; they had meant

no harm beyond a rough practical joke, and that an innocent man should have been killed made them ready to lynch the murderers. It hardly satisfied their sense of justice that the four accomplices were sentenced to penal servitude; but though Stockdale escaped hanging, it was only to endure the horrors of a life of raving madness.

Many a man and woman from the hamlet made a yearly pilgrimage to the desolate mine, and with true pathos of feeling dropped their flowers into Mat's deep and lonely grave; but none among them knew—not even Angus and his wife—that Mat's life had been willingly laid down for his enemy, and that his plunge into the deadly depth had been to him the Coming of the Lord.

## COMING.

BY B. M.

"At even, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning."

It may be in the evening,  
When the work of the day is done;  
And you have time to sit in the twilight,  
And watch the sinking sun.  
While the long bright day dies slowly,  
Over the sea,  
And the hour grows quiet and holy,  
With thoughts of Me!  
While you hear the village children  
Passing along the street;  
Among those thronging footsteps,  
May come the sound of *My* feet.  
Therefore I tell you, *Watch!*  
By the light of the evening star;  
When the room is growing dusky,  
As the clouds afar;  
Let the door be on the latch,  
In your home;  
For it may be through the gloaming,  
I will come!

It may be when the midnight  
Is heavy upon the land;  
And the black waves lying dumbly  
Along the sand.  
When the moonless night draws close,  
And the lights are out in the house;  
When the fires burn low and red,  
And the watch is ticking loudly,  
Beside the bed.  
Though you sleep, tired out on your couch;  
Still your heart must wake and watch,  
In the dark room;  
For it may be at midnight,  
I will come!

It may be at the cock crow,  
When the night is dying slowly,  
In the sky;  
And the sea looks calm and holy,  
Waiting for the dawn  
Of the golden sun,  
Which draweth nigh.  
When the mists are on the valleys, shading  
The rivers chill;  
And my morning star is fading, fading,  
Over the hill.  
Behold I say unto you, *Watch!*  
Let the door be on the latch,  
In your home.  
In the chill before the dawning,  
Between the night and morning,  
I may come!

It may be in the morning  
When the sun is bright and strong;  
And the dew is glittering sharply  
Over the little lawn.  
When the waves are laughing loudly  
Along the shore;  
And the little birds are singing sweetly  
About the door.  
With the long day's work before you,  
You rise up with the sun;  
And the neighbors come in to talk a little,  
Of all that must be done.  
But remember, that *I* may be the next  
To come in at the door;  
To call you from all your busy work  
For evermore.  
As you work, your heart must watch,  
For the door is on the latch  
In your room;  
And it may be in the morning  
I may come!

So He passed down my cottage garden,  
By the path that leads to the sea;  
Till He came to the turn of the little road,  
Where the birch and laburnum tree  
Lean over, and arch the way;  
There I saw Him a moment stay,  
And turn once more to me;  
As I wept at the cottage door—  
And lift up His hands in blessing:  
Then I saw His face no more.

And I stood still in the doorway,  
Leaning against the wall,  
Not heeding the fair white roses,  
Though I crushed them and let them fall.  
Only looking down the pathway,  
And looking towards the sea,  
And wondering, and wondering,  
When He would come back to me!

Till I was aware of an Angel  
Who was going swiftly by,  
With the gladness of one who goeth  
In the light of God Most High.

He passed the end of the cottage  
Towards the garden gate;  
(I suppose He was come down  
At the setting of the sun  
To comfort some one in the village  
Whose dwelling was desolate.)

And He paused before the door,  
Beside my place;  
And the likeness of a smile,  
Was on His face.

“Weep not,” he said, “for unto you is given,  
To watch for the coming of *His* feet,  
Who is the Glory of our blessed Heaven.

The work and watching will be very sweet,  
Even in an earthly home;

And in such an hour, as you think not,  
He will come!

So I am watching quietly  
    Every day;  
Whenever the sun shines brightly,  
    I rise, and say—  
“Surely it is the shining of His face!”  
And look unto the gates of His high place  
    Beyond the sea;  
For I know He is coming shortly,  
    To summon me.  
And when a shadow falls across the window  
    Of my room;  
Where I am working my appointed task,  
I lift my head, to watch the door, and ask  
    If He is come;  
And the Angel answers sweetly,  
    In my home—  
“Only a few more shadows  
    And He will come!”

## MY BROTHER ROBERT.

## I.

His was a disappointed life, I have heard people say; but I, who lived with him from the beginning to the end of it, can assert that it was not a disappointed life nor an unhappy one. Certainly not. What can a man want to see more in this world than the accomplishment of his plans, for which he has toiled early and late, expending on them all his youth, hope, health, and energy? That others profited by his inventions, and grew rich on them, while he remained poor, neglected, and obscure, is a mere secondary consideration. It was his work that he looked to, and not any possible rewards that it might bring him; and as he brought his work to a fair completion, and did his share of good in his day and generation, he had no right to be dissatisfied; and he was not dissatisfied. I know it for a fact—he has told me so many a time. He would say: “Don’t complain, Mary. You might complain if I had failed altogether, but I have done my work, and that is enough. I declare I feel a proud man sometimes when I see what grand things my invention is helping others to do.” I was less easily satisfied for him than he was for himself; but when I saw

that murmuring really troubled him, I tried to keep my tongue quiet.

People come now and look at his grave under the yew-tree, and go away and say they have seen it; and that is all the honor and profit my brother, Robert Janson, ever reaped from his life's labor. A year or two back some strangers came and proposed to put up a monument over his grave; but I warned them not to meddle with it as long as I lived. He would have been an old man now; but he died at thirty-seven: young, certainly—I grant that, and poor; because in his last broken-down years I had to support him—but not disappointed. He would never allow it living, and I will not allow it since he is dead. His was not a disappointed life. It will do no one any harm to tell his story now; and it will give no one any pain. I am the only person left in the world who ever had any interest in him.

## II.

We were a large family altogether, living in the farmhouse at Alster Priors: my grandfather and grandmother, my father and mother, Aunt Anna, and five children. This period, of course, dates as far back as I can remember. I was the eldest and Robert was the youngest. The others were

Charles, who succeeded to the farm—Mark, who enlisted for a soldier, and was, we believed, but were never sure, killed in Spain, fighting with the French—and John, who died a boy.

Robert was fond of the wheelwright's and carpenter's shops much more than of bird-nesting or fishing, like his brothers; and Willie Paxton often said, that at ten years old, he could handle his tools like a man. It was in these places he got his knowledge of mechanics, the schoolmaster brought him on in mathematics, and our rector, who always would have it the lad was a genius, lent him books and papers that gave accounts of inventions and things in science, and of men who had been distinguished in such matters. Robert liked to call attention to the small beginnings some of them had risen from, and Aunt Anna would always try to spite him by saying that he need not let his mind hanker after these folks, for he was to be a farmer, and farm the Little-Ings land.

From fourteen to eighteen Robert went on fretting, fidgetting, and working, until one day there was a rumor of a grand new bridge to be built over the Alster, about eleven miles above our house. Neither good words nor ill words would keep Robert from going up there day after day and staying till nightfall. It was in the time of

hay harvest, and my father was often angry at his absence. One day he said to him in a rage—little thinking his words would be taken in earnest:

“If any of these engineering machine fellows will take thee, Robert, thou may bind thyself to them for life. I never want to see thy idle face again.”

Robert did not come back that night, but the next morning he fetched his clothes when his father was out in the fields. My mother wanted Robert to go without seeing him, but the lad said, “Nay, I’ve my father’s leave,” and he stood up, with his bonnie young face all glowing and brave, fearing none of us. “When I’m a man Mary shall come and keep my house,” he said,—“won’t you, Mary?” I promised him.

We were amazed to see how father took it when he was told that Robert was set on going, and that nothing would stay him. The two took a long look at each other, then they shook hands. My mother cried to see it.

“If the lad will go, let him go in peace,” said my father. “I can make nothing of him,” and turning to Robert he said, “Thou shalt not go with a curse at thy back, my lad.”

And so Robert left us.

I was twenty-eight at that time, and I

had a strange hankering to go after the lad and take care of him; and as if to give me my liberty, the next year my grandfather and grandmother died, and the rest were well able to take tent for themselves. Still I don't know that I would have left home, had not my mother said one Christmas night—the first he was away—"Robert would be glad to see you, Mary. Your father and I were saying, why should you not go and stop with him for a change?"

So I went to Robert at Birmingham and truly the lad was glad to have a face that he knew about him. I had a little fortune of my own, so that I was no burden to him, but afterwards, as things turned out, a help. I took three rooms in a cottage a good half-mile from the town, and he changed to live with me. In the day he was at work in one of those vast manufactories of iron machinery;—I did see over one once, but what with the heat, the noise, and the stir, I could not tell now what it was like—and in the evenings I had him mostly with me. He was not so merry a companion as he had used to be, for his great idea had just begun to germinate, and many a silent hour I sat at one end of the table, while he at the other was working out his calculations, and making drawings of different parts of machinery. He got to making models after, and many a one did he fling

down and break. There was difficulty after difficulty to overcome.

He would lecture to me about his drawings sometimes, and try to make me understand the relative power of this and that lever and wheel; and though I could have remembered at the time, I could not tell you now, if I would, one fiftieth part of what he said. This was to save labor and waste; that for safety; this for speed. It was impossible to avoid being interested in his work, seeing how his heart and soul were bound up in it. I was as eager he should succeed as he was himself. "If I do succeed, Mary, it will be the making of me; and I will succeed," he used to say, after every failure. And I believed he would.

Months went on, years went on, and Robert was twenty-five, with his idea still unwrought out. In the midst of his hard toil and absorbing thoughts I was glad that he still kept his kind, warm, manly heart. There is a short bit in his story that I must not leave out—that about Rosie Kirwan. Her mother was a near neighbor of ours, and we had made acquaintance in our walks. Rosie came to tea with me sometimes, and that was the way she and Robert came, first to know, and afterwards to love, each other. Rosie was not so pretty as she was fresh-looking—fresh as a May morning in Alsterdale, or as a half-

blown rose; a tall girl, straight and strong, with a round waist and a throat white and smooth as a marble figure; a firm step, a quick eye, and rather a breezy temper. I liked her very much; she was a frank, honest, sensible girl, and her mother had brought her up well.

They came to an agreement between themselves soon, and it was really a pleasant sight to see Robert at his work and Rosie leaning over him, bending her fine brows and setting her lips firm in a conscientious endeavor to take it all in, and then giving me a quick little glance across the table, as much as to say, "I can't understand it one bit."

Mrs. Kirwan was satisfied with the engagement, though I did not quite approve of her way of speaking of it. She said, "It is always a good speculation for a girl to marry a young man of talent and energy, though he may not be rich; he is almost sure to make some way in the world. I must confess that I should not let Rosie throw herself away on anybody; and, if Robert gets forward as he promises to do, I shall be glad to let him have her. She is a good girl."

The young things made no calculations, being content, apparently, with the present time of loving each other.

At last the day came when Robert

walked into my parlor one night and said, "It is done, Mary." His face was all alight with pride and satisfaction, for Rosie was there, and, when he spoke, she marched straight up to him, and gave him a kiss. "I promised I would, Mary," said she, blushing like a rose; "I promised him six months ago;" and the shame-faced girl looked as if she had done wrong, whereas Robert vowed she had been hard as flint, and that was the very first time she had suffered their lips to meet. "Then it is a kiss for luck," said I; and Rosie was as still as a mouse all the evening after.

We had to hear about his success now. It was a grand invention we knew then, and all the world knows it now; but, there were many things to be done before Robert was to be a made man by it. I believe people are no more ready now than they were then to adopt new systems; but it had been submitted to a number of men, both scientific and practical, and they all pronounced it the finest invention of the age. He must get it patented; he must do this, he must do that, he must do the other. Words.

He bade Rosie and me good-bye, and carried his model to London—it was great expense—and there he stayed; we being very anxious all the time. To tell you the backwards and forwards work he had, the advice on one hand and the warnings on

the other, would be more than I could do, or than you would care to hear. Besides, is it not known well enough, by all who interest themselves in such things, the trouble there is to get a new invention adopted?

All this time in London was lost time. Robert wanted money, and money he had not, and he was not earning any. My father had done for him all he ever intended to do, so I parted with my fortune, all but a bare maintenance, and kept him for a month or two longer, trying on all sides to get someone to adopt his invention. Nobody would or could. It was a depressed season, and there was no spirit to risk the production of anything novel and costly.

He came back to me: that time I was alone, and glad I was that it so happened. I should not have known him if I had met him in a strange place unexpectedly. All the healthy brown was gone out of his face, his skin was pallid, his eyes and temples were sunk, his clothes were hanging about him as if they had been made for a man twice his size. When he spoke, it was in a hurried, nervous way, and his hands trembled as if he had a stroke. Oh how ill he looked! It is my belief, that in the last months he had been away, he had never had enough to eat.

One stormy winter night he came with-

out having given me warning. He was drenched with rain, and I said to him something about the folly of walking in his bad health in such weather, and where was his luggage? He spread out his poor thin hands and said, "Mary, I carry all my possessions on my back," and then leaning his face on the table he sobbed like a child. I shall never forget him as he appeared that night—never, while I live! He was no more like the Robert that had left me nine months before than the broken bits of driftwood are like the brave ship that sailed out of harbor a year ago. He could tell me nothing that night, but the next morning he said that finding he should never be able to do better for his invention, he had given it up to the manufacturer of machinery in whose service he had worked, on condition, that he would bring it out within three years. "I don't care for profits, Mary," he said, "let us have enough to live on and I shall be satisfied."

"But Rosie Kirwan?" I suggested.

"Don't talk about her, Mary. Rosie and I have broken—her mother heard how badly I was doing and said the engagement must be dropped. I did not try to hold her to it—she would have stood by me, but—" and the poor lad's voice broke down.

## III.

After this Robert had a bad illness, and his brain was affected more or less to the end of his life in consequence, but the intervals between were long, and he and I together led a not unhappy life. In less than two years, there was scarcely an extensive manufactory in the kingdom that had not adopted Robert's invention, and its usefulness was extended to far other and different purposes than he had designed. It was like a new principle in mechanical powers that he had discovered and developed, for others to carry forward. The person whose capital had enabled him to bring to practical results what Robert had designed, grew a very rich man speedily; he once sent Robert a fifty-pound note, and we were not in a position to refuse it. As I said before, I had parted with all but a bare subsistence. Robert was never more fit for work. We went to a seaside village and stayed there a year or two, in hopes that it would restore him, but it never did. He liked to sit on the sands, tracing out impossible designs with his stick, and demonstrating their feasibility to me. From the lectures I got I ought to be one of the first theoretical machinists of the age.

There is nothing more to tell. He lived

eleven years longer and we went home to Alsterdale to my mother. My father was dead then, and my brother Charles had the farm. But Robert frequently said—especially towards the last—“Mary, whatever people think, and however it may seem, remember, I am not a disappointed man. I have done my work!”

Robert’s opinion may not be the opinion of those who read these lines, but it was his, and it is mine. After all these years it matters not a thought who is right and who is wrong. I always hoped he would be taken first, for who would have cared for him, like me? I had my desire. I have outlived him more than thirty years.



## WHEN THE TIDE GOES OUT.

BY AMELIA E. BARR.

Full white moon upon a waste of ocean,  
High full tide upon the sandy shore;  
In the fisher's cot without a motion,  
Waiteth he that never shall sail more—  
Waiteth he, and one sad comrade, sighing,  
Speaking lowly, says, "Without a doubt  
He will rest soon: Some one calls the dying  
When the tide goes out."

Some One calls the tide, when in its flowing  
It hath touched the limits of its bound;  
Some great Voice; and all the billows, knowing  
What omnipotence is in that sound,  
Hasten back to ocean, none delaying  
For man's profit, pleasuring, or doubt—  
Backward to their source, not one wave straying;  
And the tide is out.

Some One calls the soul o'er life's dark ocean,  
When its tide breaks high upon the land,  
And it listens with such glad emotion  
As the "called" alone can understand—  
Listens, hastens to its source of being,  
Leaves the sands of Time without a doubt,  
While we sadly wait, as yet but seeing  
That the tide is out.

## ROSE.

BY COUNTESS DE GASPARIN.

They had all been working hard; in the meadows, getting the hay in; in the vineyard, cutting the leaves; in the field, tying up the sheaves: July was drawing to a close.

"I do not know," said the mother to me, "what ails my Rose. She has fretted too much for her father, she has over-tired herself. It will be no harm though, I am sure." But evidently her heart was heavy.

On the morrow the doctor paid a visit to the little room. One reached it by a wooden staircase; the window got all the sun, and looked on a small garden. A young girl sat sewing away as fast as she could—a slender form with a fair innocent face. Her mother was standing a little behind her.

When the doctor entered, the young girl looked at him in amazement, rose, blushed deeply, then suddenly dropped down again in her chair, in all the bashfulness of sixteen.

She had never left her mother, had never been to dances, never run about the roads in the evenings hand-in-hand with other girls, not that she was unsocial or proud, but she knew better things than these, and

then she loved her mother, and she mourned her father. To sew in her little room, to weed in the garden, cut the vines, make hay, beat hemp in the autumn, go to church on Sundays, sing hymns, return to sit on the benches of the school, where as a child she had been taught to love God—these were her delights—delights so true and holy that never face beamed with more serene brightness, than did hers.

This visit of the doctor wearied her. “She sick indeed! Certainly she felt tired, she did not eat, but was that any reason for bringing that fine gentleman here?”

The visit was over, the doctor left. The mother, who was uneasy, followed him.

“She may recover,” said the doctor.

“She is very ill, then?”

“She may recover.”

The prescription was written out; he left, walked on some way, then turning to me he said, “But she will die!”

I often saw her after that; that rustic Rose—that sweetbrier of the woods that never opened out fully, save to God and her mother.

Her soul had the transparency of crystal, truth came naked from her lips, she told you what she liked and what she did not like, without any circumlocution. She knew only the yea, yea, of the gospel, and with that she had much graceful ingenu-

ousness and cordial affection. Hers was one of those individualities mightily developed by the Bible, uniting all the simplicity of the village, the inexperience of her age and of her retired way of life, with extremely delicate perceptions and great knowledge of her own heart. She showed sometimes the blank amazement of a bird that has just left the nest; at other times she would utter some deep saying that a master-mind might gladly have claimed.

Rose suffered very much, death had to wrestle with all the strength of sixteen. She did all she could to conceal her sufferings, but it was hardly possible; it was as though she were broken on the wheel. At such times she would clasp both her arms round her mother's neck and hide her face on her breast, then she would raise herself and look into her eyes with clear confiding glance. Her mother turned away and wept.

Never were there greater sufferings in any poor body, never greater peace in any soul. It was one of those easily detached lives that the Lord just touches, and which fall off like a vestment. This mother was a widow, this daughter was in all the first brilliancy of her youth, they loved each other and yet they tranquilly advanced—the one torn to pieces but submissive, the other a little sad but composed—towards

that turn in the road where they had to bid each other farewell. It was done simply, without much speaking, without any transports. The daughter saw that she was going to die, the mother had known it long. Rose asked no questions, her mother had kept nothing back, they walked on side by side, day after day—the last day would come when God pleased.

These hidden existences are nearer to heaven than ours. These lives which unfold so quietly are better prepared for a sudden close. They have not so much to leave, they are more accustomed to receive everything—good and bad—directly from the hand of God, the soul's relations with Him are more simple, the habit of obedience more strongly formed.

There was nothing triumphant about the departure of Rose. Some deaths are glorious; hers advanced quiet, modest, a little austere like herself, at times illuminated with rays from above.

Neither mother nor daughter troubled themselves about an earthly future. Her mother would say:

“Afterwards I shall be dull enough, but I shall not be alone, or long in this world.”

Then Rose would look at her. “He will not forsake you, mother.”

She had always pretty children about her—the children of a brother and sister

settled in the village. Little boys with merry faces, very noisy fellows, but quiet there; a cradle, and under green curtains, a fresh little face; smiles without cause and mottled hands beating the coverlet. Flowers too charmed her, wild flowers gathered by her former companions: In April the periwinkle, in May the lily of the valley, in June the honeysuckle, in July the sage, the pink, the red poppy, with the corn-flower, the sweetbrier and the mignonette. Rose would take them one by one and look at them. "They are beautiful—they are sweet—last year I used to gather them myself, great aprons full of them." Then she grew silent, then suddenly raising her eyes and looking at her mother, "You must not cry, mother, I am not fretting over myself."

And yet Rose had heart sinkings; had hours when her heart turned back to life. Then would come across her images of health, of pleasure, even of those noisy pleasures, which she had refused. But this did not last. "I am very wicked," she would say; she clasped her hands, her calm returned.

One day, quite confused, she said, "Could you believe it, mother, I am thinking of my white frock, my first communion frock? I have only worn it once, mother. You will put it on me, will you not?"

The mother, with wrung heart and closed lips, stood at the foot of the bed ardently looking at her child.

"Will they give me the crown? the beautiful crown with roses, orange-flowers, and hawthorn?" The tears run silently down her mother's face. "You will keep it, mother?"

This was the last sigh after earthly things; afterwards came on the agony; afterwards the Lord drew near; the young girl felt her heart beat with impatience to depart; happiness overflowed her; always sincere, she did not exaggerate the strength of her faith, but she was in holy haste—her eyes shone.

The hour struck; it was in the night; with a voice still firm looking at her young friends gathered round her bed, sad and aghast—"Give your hearts to Jesus," she said, then let her head fall upon her mother's breast. That was all.

When the morning came, the village awoke. It was baking day; the oxen went heavily to the fountains, the mowers betook themselves to the meadows, the children to school, the larks sang deliriously in the light of the beautiful sun.

On earth there was nothing changed, only a mother that wept; nor was anything changed in the little room, only a beautiful white crown was suspended on the wooden partition close against the bed.

## THE LITTLE TRAVELER.

BY AMELIA E. BARR.

Straight down the city's crowded street  
A little Traveler went;  
The eager throng, with hurrying feet,  
On gain or pleasure bent,  
Made free for him a narrow way,  
But none among them bid him stay.

Only a child, yet for his sake  
Wealth, thoughtful, stepped aside,  
Power waived a while its right of place,  
And Rank forgot its pride,  
While many a head a moment bent  
As on the little Traveler went.

A Stranger from some far-off land  
Spoke then in doubtful tone:  
“ 'Tis said your race bow not to kings,  
But unto Worth alone.  
Who, then, is this, to whom all pay  
Such homage in the crowded way?”

“A Traveler, more noble far  
Than kings of noblest age;  
Purer than any praying priest,  
Wiser than any sage.  
He rests in yonder holy place:  
Come, then, and look upon his face.”

The tender lights fell soft and dim;  
The air was thrilled with psalms;  
He lay in coffin white and small,  
With lilies in his palms—  
Serenely peaceful, as those sleep  
Who have no longer watch to keep.

O happy Traveler! thus to win,  
While yet unsoiled by tears,  
The Home that we shall hardly find  
Through weeping, weary years;  
Whose small, unsandaled feet may stray  
On heights for which we vainly pray!



## MISS HARRINGTON'S PREDICTION.

"Janet, I tell you again you will rue this foolish marriage, you will repent too late that you did not follow my advice."

Janet between laughing and crying shook her head. "But, ma'am, he loves me so much that I cannot be unhappy."

"'He loves me so much!' how many women, Janet, that delusion has led to their ruin! The only answer a silly girl can give when warned of her folly is—'Oh, he loves me so much!'"

"I know, ma'am, that you are against girls in service, marrying. I have heard you say so often," answered Janet gently. "And yet, ma'am, if you love a person you would rather live in a hole in the ground with them than in the Queen's palace without."

Miss Harrington frowned. "I don't approve of women loving so furiously," she said sharply. "No woman ought ever to allow herself such an expression as you have just made use of. It is not at all proper."

Janet's great hazel eyes looked down under their eyelashes at this speech. She was a simple girl, and her rule of right was contained in a very few broad touches, and

Miss Harrington's ethics were always lost on her.

"Well, go away now, Janet," she said, rather peevishly; "and if you have any common sense left, remember my warning. I tell you that this marriage with Robert Maylin will make you the most miserable woman in existence. He is a worthless fellow,"—Janet pouted, and gave her head the slightest possible inclination of a toss—"and he will get tired of you before the year is out. And when he has spent all your money, for he is marrying you for nothing else"—Miss Janet pursed up a very pretty pair of lips: "something better than that," she thought—"and when he has drunk away all your income, he will get cross to you, and perhaps beat you, and then leave you on the parish. This is the history of nine-tenths of you young fools who marry for love, as you call it. And, who knows?—you may have some little children; the thing is not impossible; but if you have, what will you do when you cannot give them bread? Think of that!—a squalling, starving family about you! Go along, you foolish girl. I am provoked with your obstinacy. To prefer that good-for-nothing fellow and all his wicked ways to a comfortable home and an indulgent mistress—it is really too bad! And how I am to be suited when you leave me, I'm

sure I don't in the world know. But you girls are so ungrateful, it is of no use to be kind to you. As soon as you have got into our little ways, and begin to understand us, you leave us without gratitude or remorse, and we have all the trouble of teaching a new servant over again. There, go along—do; try if you cannot spend half an hour in the day usefully; and go and trim my blue cap, and do it better than you did last time. I won't have Robert Maylin's love in my work; and I am sure since you have been mad after that fellow you have done nothing well, and scarcely done anything at all."

And Miss Harrington, drawing her easy-chair closer to the fire, adjusted her spectacles, and began on the police sheet of the *Times*; feeling that she had disburdened her conscience, and performed her duty to society.

Janet shut the drawing-room door thoughtfully: not because she believed implicitly in all the forebodings of her mistress; but they struck on her sadly somehow, and she wished they had not been said. But Robert Maylin, to whom she told a little—not all—that had passed, called Miss Harrington "a stupid old muff," and told Janet so often that she was a fool to listen to her, that at last Janet believed him and said, "Yes, she was a fool," too.

And then he swore eternal love for the hundredth time that week, and looked so handsome while he did so, that Janet, gazing at him with a kind of wondering spell-bound admiration, thought there was more truth in one of his smiles, and more worth in one of his words, than in all Miss Harrington's fancies and frets put together.

"I am sure you will always be kind to me, Robert," she said, suddenly, laying her hand on his shoulder, and looking at him in her guileless way, right into his eyes.

She was a pretty girl, our Janet, with an open, truthful forehead, and a loving smile; and Robert thought he had never seen her look so pretty as now.

"Kind, Janet? Am I a man and could I be anything else but kind to any woman in the world—still less to one I loved? I could not lift my hand against a woman, if you paid me for it. I am not one of those brutes who kick and cuff you about like dogs—Kind! no woman ever found me unkind yet. I love them all too well for that—though, perhaps, a precious sight of you have found me too much the contrary," he added, with a slight laugh below his breath. Janet did not hear this last clause; which, perhaps, was quite as well, as matters stood.

Janet was comforted, credulous, and convinced. She knew nothing of a young

girl lying pale in her shroud in a certain churchyard, because Robert Maylin had first loved and then deserted her. She had never heard either of Mary Williams, the wife of young John Williams, the baker, who took to drinking about a year after she had known Robert Maylin to hide her love and remorse together, and who had been willing to leave her three little ones, if he would have taken her off with him as he offered. She was ignorant of the history of the pretty housemaid in Berkely Square, where Robert was footman, who had lost her situation—and more too—for love of that handsome villain; and who had been afterwards taken up near Waterloo Bridge, mad with despair and destitution. People did say he had stolen her savings as well, though she was so infatuated with him she would not prosecute him; and only cried like one distraught when he left her to the workhouse or to the streets. She knew nothing of the life he had led since he left home, a bold and beautiful boy of fifteen, to seek his fortune in the world; and treated as slanders the faint rumors every now and then flying about, of the curse he had been to every pretty woman who had taken his fancy. She believed in his worth, because she loved him for his good looks; and she made, as all women do, the hero of her heart the model of her morality also.

The wedding-day came at last. Miss Harrington, who had been dignified and illused, sulky and snappish by turns, gave the dinner—from charity she said—gave the wedding clothes, because country girls have no notion of propriety, and she did not choose her old servant to disgrace her house; and she gave two-thirds of the furniture—"only to keep the poor wretch from the workhouse at first; she will be sure to go there in the end."

"It is not because I approve of the match, or like the man," she said. "I do neither; it is only from the merest charity that I give anything to them. As far as Janet is concerned, her folly in marrying Robert Maylin deserves some punishment."

To do Robert justice, he was as much attached to Janet as he could be to any one. But his love was of a kind that did not wear well; it was love born of personal fancy, drawing nothing from respect, and less from principle. Yet the first months of his married life went on smoothly enough. The pretty cottage, and the pretty wife, the air of peace and love within those four walls, had a charm for Robert, which surprised himself—vagrant as he was by nature. He liked his new occupation too—that of a market gardener—and felt its healthful action on

his frame, not a little enfeebled by his London habits. And being a very handy, capable fellow, he soon learned his business as well as the best of them and made some good hits in cabbages and cauliflowers.

But this season of pleasure did not last long. With the waning summer Robert Maylin's love faded, his garden became stupid, his work degrading, his house small and mean—so different to the jolly times of Chesham Place and Berkely Square. His wife was growing ugly, somehow he wished that he had never married. He was a deal better off as he was. What need had he to screw himself up for life in a village with a silly woman! And after such thoughts he went off to the ale-house, where he found amusement in skittles and the barmaid's saucy blue eyes.

Janet saw the change, but she tried to soothe it away like a sickness. She did her best to make her home inviting and herself smart—a quality which Robert placed at the head of all feminine virtues. But all would not do. He had wearied of matrimony, as he had wearied of love so often before, and you cannot bring back the dead to life. He was tired of her affection, and he wished twenty times a day that he had never left his plush and his foot-board. At last he told Janet plainly,

that "she bothered him, and he wished she would leave him alone."

Janet had a pair of red eyes that evening when Miss Harrington sent for her to give her a scolding, and a baby's cap.

"Perhaps it teases Robert that I am changed and don't look as I used," she thought as she slowly walked to her former home. "When it is all over and things put to rights again, and when he has a baby to play with, he will like his own home again."

When her old mistress rated her for her red eyes she stoutly denied all moral causes for her depression, saying, "One feels differently at these times, ma'am, and one cannot help crying for nothing. It does one good. Robert is as kind as can be, and I have no fault to find with any one."

And then she sat down on a chair and wept as if her heart would break.

The baby was born, and Robert less inclined for home than ever. He hated to hear it cry—and what baby will not cry?—and he hated to see his wife nurse and fondle it. And how are babies to live, if wives don't nurse and fondle them?

Things went on in this manner; only getting worse as Robert fell from weariness to neglect, from neglect to dislike, and finally to ill-usage. Every tear from Janet was a reproach vehemently resented;

every caress an annoyance brutally rejected; her plaintive voice was the very thing to drive him from home for amusement, and her forced cheerfulness sent him out of doors for quiet. Sad or gay, smiles or tears, love or reproach—it was all the same; he would be ill-used, and find an excuse for himself in her conduct.

Another baby was born—almost within the year—making such a rapid advance towards a patriarchal condition of household that Robert talked moodily of the workhouse. But Janet thought that drink, not babies, would bring him to the workhouse, if ever he went there.

Things grew worse daily; Janet had black eyes and bruised lips often now, and her gait and actions were those of a person badly lamed. Robert had taken to beat her whenever he was tipsy—which was almost every night—till sometimes she thought he would murder her. And if it had not been for the children, she would rather have preferred his putting her out of the way, as she called it; if he would not have been hung for it!

One morning she rose early, after a night of heavy, dreamless sleep. But not so early as her husband, whose place by her was empty. As she glanced round the room, something strange and unfamiliar struck her. She did not at first understand what

it was, but soon the open drawers, the rifled boxes, the scattered furniture, told her that she had been robbed while she slept so heavily that past night. Trembling she called her husband; but no one answered. Hurrying on a few clothes she ran down stairs, where a scene of infinitely worse confusion shocked and frightened her still more. The little stock of plate, partly bought by her own money, partly given by good Miss Harrington, and greatly prized, was gone; the best of the books—not best for their contents but for their bindings, which was all Robert Maylin was likely to think of—had likewise gone; the portable little prettiness about the house; and, when Janet came to examine more minutely into matters, a small sum of money, which she had saved as a beginning for the children, had been carried off. All her best gowns and shawls were missing as well, and Robert Maylin with them. An amethyst brooch, which Miss Harrington had given her on her wedding-day; a little alabaster figure of more beauty than worth, but which Janet had loved almost like a living creature; and an old-fashioned gold watch that had been an heir-loom in the family for generations, and which was popularly believed to have belonged to that fabulous squire, whom most country families claim as their orig-

inal progenitor—these had disappeared, together with the rest; and poor Janet felt utterly bereft of every possession in the world.

Search was made throughout the country; but Robert Maylin was not to be found. Janet was obstinate in the belief in ditches and drunkenness, and often expressed her conviction that her husband would turn up again somehow. She refused positively to look on him as the thief, and used to cry bitterly when her neighbors, in their rough way, asserted that her own husband had robbed her. He might desert her, because he no longer loved her; but how could she think him capable of such a wickedness as this? However, a letter from Liverpool set the matter at rest. For, without touching on the robbery, Master Robert coolly asserted his intention of proceeding forthwith to the United States, whither he was driven, he said, by the fear of a large family, and from whence he would return when he could support his wife and children as became him. It was an artful letter, and left a large margin for future events. It ended by exhorting Janet to be a sensible girl, and not to fret after him; that he should work for her, and she would be better without him. In which opinion many of the villagers concurred.

Janet found that loneliness is not always

friendlessness. As if called up by magic, a host of kind hands pressed round her in her hour of need; a host of kind hearts offered her their sympathy, and loving faces spoke their pity. Miss Harrington was generous and acid as usual. She rated Janet for hours together for her folly in marrying that good-for-nothing fellow; for her wickedness in having two children so fast on each other's heels, when she had nothing to give them; and for her babyish belief in the possibility of any other robber than her husband. At the same time, she gave the babies food and clothing, and set up Janet as a green-grocer in the neighboring town; for which business her apprenticeship in her husband's market-garden peculiarly fitted her.

Time wore on, and fortune gave good gifts to Janet. By steadiness to her business, she gathered a large trade together. Something, perhaps, was owing to her touching history, and something also to her touching manners, which, tranquil and gentle, had such a tinge of melancholy in them, that even a casual customer must have been won over. Her children were her pride. Well dressed, well educated, they might stand amongst the children of far grander people than she, as pretty and oftentimes better behaved than any of them. She did not spoil them, though she

sacrificed everything for them, but she was bringing them up with almost patrician delicacy, and with full as much patrician tenderness. They were sweet children, and she might well be proud of them, and not unwisely anchor her whole cargo of future happiness on their well-being and good conduct.

The children had been just put to bed, and Janet was working in the back parlor. The shop was shut, and all was silent; only the hurried tread of a few passers-by was heard, mingled with the shrill laughter of idle boys and girls congregated in the lanes by the scanty gas-lights of the little town.

A knock came to the street-door. Who could it be at this time of night? The widow led a quiet and respectable life, and was not accustomed to visitors so late as this—and was not fond of them either. However, it might be a neighbor wanting assistance in some way; so she rose and went to the door, which she opened with a kind of quake, feeling that presence of evil which sensitive natures do feel, even while undiscovered.

“Who is there?” she said, shading the candle with her hand, so that all the light flared upon her own face.

“Janet, do you not know me?” said a voice she knew too well. A man’s hand

touched her arm, and her husband strode into the shop.

He was paler than when she saw him last, thinner, a trifle bald, and his hair was sprinkled with grey. His eyes were blood-shot, perhaps with traveling, and his whole appearance was worn and shabby. Janet set down the candle, and stood for a moment irresolute. She neither screamed nor fainted; but she looked ghastly by the flickering light, and she could scarcely breathe.

"Janet," said her husband, in his gentlest tone, taking her hand lightly between his own, as one holding by sufferance, not by right, "are you glad to see me again, or have I behaved so badly, and you have been too angry ever to forgive me? Shall I go back, Janet, to all the misery of my self-reproaches, feeling that you have not forgiven me, and that God has not accepted my repentance, or will you live with me again, a penitent and reformed man? I have repented, wife, most bitterly of all that I have done wrong against you. Will you not allow my penitence to produce my pardon? Eh, Janet?"

Janet was overcome. After all he was her own husband, lawfully married by the creed of her childhood, and bound by ties that no man was to put asunder—the minister had said so—and he was the father of her children. If she herself still nourished

feelings of bitterness against him, had she the right to deprive her little ones of a father? Poor Janet! She gave a deep sob, and then flung her arms round the man's neck, and murmured some misquoted passages about a prodigal son which seemed to relieve her soul mightily, though they were not quite correct.

Robert was taken to see his children as they lay sleeping in their little cots by the side of the mother's bed. And the sight affected him much, to judge by his tears and upturned eyes, his low-breathed blessings and tender caresses. By the side of those little cots he told Janet how guilty he had been, but only for leaving her; he stoutly denied all knowledge of or participation in the robbery, occasioned, he suggested, by his leaving the cottage-door ajar; how deeply he felt his wickedness; and how resolved he was that a future of untiring good should wash out his past evil. Janet, naturally a credulous woman—because a fond one—was doubly convinced, and doubly happy. She had received back, not only her husband, but a saint as well, and henceforth might expect sanctification of heart together with happiness of life in her renewed wedlock. She kissed her husband tenderly and welcomed him anew, saying, "I always believed you innocent."

Janet's friends were all displeased when

it was noised abroad that Robert had returned, and had been received by her. Miss Harrington withdrew her custom, and denied her house; and many of her old supporters grumbled at her loudly, and called her a fool for her pains. Janet let them grumble. Too happy in her love, and too confident in her happiness, she was indifferent to the storm without; and, though not ungrateful for all that had been done for her, she felt that she had taken the better part by her reconciliation so fully, that these murmurs sank into insignificance before the weight of her spiritual convictions. If she had been foolish, yet she had been also morally right; and a conscientious person can well bear up against the charge of folly, when backed with this conviction of right.

"Janet," said Robert, after he had been with her about a month, "your custom has fallen off very much. Your books do not give one half they did before I came. How is this?"

He spoke in a dry unpleasant voice, with a sharp suspicious glance, and a dictatorial manner.

"I don't know, Robert," replied Janet, quietly, "unless it be that I have offended some of my friends, which I know I have done, and my business has suffered in consequence."

"We can't go on in this way," Robert said, with a still more unpleasant manner.

"Oh! I'm not afraid! Steadiness will bring it all back again."

"And in the meantime are we to starve?"

"Starve!—no dear. I have plenty. I have saved fifty pounds already. It is in the bank, and we shall do very badly if we eat up that before I get my custom back again."

Robert's eyes sparkled. "Fifty pounds!" he said, coaxingly. "Little miser! you never told me of this!"

Janet blushed painfully. Something foreboded evil to her, and she would willingly have retracted her admission, if she could have done so. Not that she had any definite suspicion or fear. It was simply that vague foreboding that accompanies a false step.

"It is for the children," she said hurriedly, "and so I keep it sacred even from myself."

Robert was silent, but he became more loving, playful, tender, fascinating than he had ever been either before or after their marriage.

"You had much better sell your stock and good-will and go to America," he said suddenly on the fourth day. "You will do better with me in New York." Then he drew her on his knee, and kissed her. "Sell all that you have," he repeated. "I had a

capital situation in New York which I gave up to come to you, but I may have it again if I ask for it within a year. Be advised by me, Janet. I know the world better than you do."

Janet at first demurred, then wept, then relented, then refused again, wept afresh, finally consented; won over by the promises and tender caresses her husband lavished on her alternately. He had behaved so well since he came back—he seemed to be so thoroughly reformed—that Janet felt she would be wicked to doubt him.

The sale was effected, and by it Janet realized a large sum of money, altogether one hundred and fifty pounds, and with this her husband asserted to her and to every one else, they could make their fortunes in five years.

They took ship at Liverpool, and sailed for New York.

They had a prosperous voyage and Janet and the children bore it well. But Robert was moody and snappish and more than once told Janet that "a wife was a great hindrance to a man, and that if he had been alone with such a capital he would have been a gentleman in a year or two."

"But if you had been alone you would not have had such a capital," said Janet simply. "You know I made it for us."

He growled something unintelligible and walked away. Janet's heart sank within her.

"If I have been a fool after all! If I have been deceived again," she thought as she watched him in the distance. But she would not give way to such a thought, and felt quite penitent that it had crossed her.

"You must not mind my humors," said Robert, coming back after a short time. "I was always a sulky, ill-tempered boy, and, heaven mend me! I am not much better now. Don't mind me, Janet, I don't mean what I say."

He patted her head kindly and kissed her forehead, and for the next two or three days they were very happy.

Land was in sight and all was excitement. People running frantically about, rushing after their luggage, crying with pleasure or stilled by anticipation.

"Here, Janet, take out the money from that box," said Robert. "In all this confusion it is not safe, for I shall have to leave you on board while I go and look for lodgings. Take it out and I will secure it."

Janet obeyed unhesitatingly.

"Where shall I put it?" she asked.

"Sew it into the inside of my waistcoat," said Robert, quietly. "It will be safe there."

She did as she was told, stitching it in securely.

"I will come back again for you and the children," he then said, kissing her, "as soon as I have found lodgings. It is such a tramp for us all to go together; you stay quietly till I come and fetch you. Hurrah, Janet! we are at home at last!"

He ran up on deck gaily, and flung himself into the first boat going off to shore. As long as Janet could see him he stood in the stern, waving his hand and then his handkerchief.

Hours—long, weary, endless hours passed by, and no one returned for Janet. By degrees and in time the whole vessel was emptied, and only the wife and her two children remained. It was against rules that they should stay any longer, and the first mate came and told her they must "clear out."

"My husband has gone for lodgings for us, sir," said Janet, trembling. "He has not come back yet, and I do not know where to go to."

The first mate was very sorry—they should have managed better—he would have allowed her to stay if he could, but it was against orders and he must obey his captain. He was really very sorry for her; but she must clear out in double quick time for all that. Rules must be obeyed, and discipline kept up.

There was no help for it. Janet was put

on shore with her two children, and must fare for herself as well as she could. She had five shillings in her pocket, which she calculated would give them all supper and a bed to-night, and to-morrow she would find her husband if he was alive in New York.

Wandering about, all bewildered at the strange place, not knowing where she was or where she must go, holding her children in her hand, one of whom was crying bitterly from weariness and dread, she met a motherly-looking, handsome woman of middle age, with a kind eye and positive brow; a woman that made you love her and obey her at the same moment. She looked hard at Janet and half stopped. Janet, swayed by one of her usual impulses, stopped too, and spoke to her.

"My husband left me in the ship this morning," she said, "to look for lodgings for me and the children. I am afraid that some accident has happened to him, for he has never come back; I was obliged to leave the vessel; they would not let me sleep there——"

"It is against orders," said the stranger, promptly.

"Yes, so the mate told me, ma'am. But as I am a perfect stranger here, I don't know where to go to, and my children are getting tired and sleepy. Can you tell me

where I can find a respectable lodging for the night?"

"Come home with me," said the woman, after a moment's pause. "I see that you are a stranger, and I am sure you are respectable. I will give you a bed to-night, and you can look for your husband to-morrow. A fool! to leave you in this manner. What was the man about, I wonder?"

Janet thanked her gratefully, and the woman took her home.

They had supper and beds prepared for them; all done in a certain great-hearted, motherly, majestic way, that impressed Janet deeply. Not much conversation passed; for the poor girl was both too tired and too anxious to talk; but she kissed her hostess in a child-like, loving manner, and cried on her neck, and clung to her tenderly, and thanked her with an almost passionate gratitude. "Not for herself so much," she said, "as for her dear children." And the stranger seemed to read right down to the bottom of her guest's heart, and to renew again and again all the freshness of her motherly cares. And so they parted for the night; Janet holding the hand of her hostess long and lingeringly, and wondering at herself afterwards at the strength of the impulse which attracted her.

She went to bed early as it was, but she could not sleep. A thousand nervous fan-

cies, a thousand horrible fears, disturbed her. She tried to hope there was some mistake on her husband's part, but she failed sorely in her attempt; and at last, abandoning herself to a fit of despair—almost like madness—she gave herself up to the terrible belief that she had again trusted, and been again deserted. Deserted, robbed, left to starve and die, she and her children, in this strange wild city! And this was the man she had loved so trustingly; this was the man who had perjured himself so fearfully!

A voice called cheerily through the hall—"Bessie! Bessie! wife! come down." A man's step strode rapidly through the rooms, and Janet heard her husband laugh as he met her hostess merrily, and called her "wife" and "sweetheart." He was laughing gaily, singing snatches of popular ballads; and the mistress of the house was laughing too.

"You ungrateful vagabond," said the woman he had called Bessie. "Is this the way you behave to your lawful wife the first day of your return, after such a long absence? What trick have you been playing now, I wonder?"

Robert said something, but Janet could not catch the words. He seemed, however, to be giving the woman something, for she laughed gently and cried, "How beautiful!"

and then she stifled her voice somehow, and then they both laughed again gaily, gaily; and in a short time they sat down to supper so merry and happy! while that poor pale girl lay like death between her children.

"What do you think I have done, Robert?" said the woman after a short pause.

"What, Bess? I am no hand at riddles, and cannot guess. Out with it, old lady."

"Why, I met a poor woman to-day with her two children; she had just come from England, and her fool of a husband had left her on board, while he went to look for lodgings for them. He left her so long that she was obliged to clear out before he came back. She is a nice, pretty, respectable young thing, and I was glad to serve her, for she was a countrywoman of yours, dear. By-the-by, I dare say she came over in the same ship. I never thought to ask her name. You may be able to do something for her—perhaps find her lout of a husband—and teach him not to lose his wife again. Poor young creature!"

Every word of which Janet heard as if a thousand trumpets had sounded.

There was a dead silence. It seemed as if her husband was too much startled to venture on an answer.

"Are you not well, my dear?" said Bessie

kindly. "How pale you have turned, all at once!"

"It is nothing, dear," answered Robert. "Only a little pain in my chest. Give me a little brandy; that will cure me, I'll warrant."

After this Janet heard nothing distinctly. The conversation was carried on in a subdued tone, as between people sitting side by side. Only once Janet distinguished the words—"successful spec"—"above a hundred pounds—waistcoat—give it to you to-morrow." Soon after this, they went away, but Janet heard them talking in a low voice in the room next her own.

A few hours passed—hours that changed the soft heart of the wife into one of iron, and nerved her trembling hand and stilled her throbbing blood. She blushed till her temples burnt with shame, for her gross credulity—with shame at her childish faith, but they also made her heart spring up like a strong man's courage—masculine and resolute, equal to its fate. And this because of the two sleeping little ones. By herself she would have sunk utterly prostrate, as guardian to them she stood like a lioness at bay. Nothing stronger—nothing more determined—nothing braver drew breath in New York than that timid, patient, girlish wife, transformed into the heroine by maternal love.

Quiet and pale as a ghost she rose—dressing herself noiselessly and with incredible speed. She then took up her sleeping children and dressed them, still asleep. Leaving them on the bed she softly opened the door of her room, and stole to that of her husband. She turned the handle and entered. A night light was burning and it showed her where Robert had thrown his clothes. She walked softly to where they lay, took up the waistcoat, unstitched the notes, and put them in her bosom. As she turned to leave the room her husband opened his full eyes upon her. She stood and met them, and he was too much stricken by fear—too much awed by her manner—too much crushed by conscience to speak to her. So she escaped from the house without hindrance and without disturbing the sleep of her kind hostess.

She took sail by a boat leaving for England that morning and returned to her old place. With her capital of one hundred pounds she set up anew in another business, and soon regained all her old friends. Even Miss Harrington, though she scolded her in her old way, loaded her with presents as before, and Janet found that she was happier now than ever—since she had thrown aside her weakness and been sufficient unto herself. And she was right. In weakness lies misery, in strength of will

and singleness of purpose, lies peace—be the circumstances what they may.

Janet never heard of her husband again, until many years after, when a letter came from “Elizabeth Maylin,” telling her of his death. Though Bessie still preserved the name, she knew now that she had not been Robert’s real wife. On his death-bed he confessed all to her, and who the pretty stranger had been whom she had long thought to be a common thief and imposter. And Bessie wrote one of the noblest letters that woman ever penned to woman, and spoke of her unintentional wrong in such a large, heroic manner, that Janet felt as if she had been almost the one to blame in having caused such evil fortune to one so great and good.

But they made it up between them, and in future years Bessie Maylin received one of Janet’s children when he had grown to be a man and made him the heir of all her property. And then Janet wrote her and said “how strangely they had exemplified the old truth—‘Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days.’”

## A TAP AT THE DOOR.

BY AMELIA E. BARR.

A hand tapped at my door low down, low down;  
I opened it, and saw two eyes of brown,  
Two lips of cherry red,  
A little curly head,  
A bonny, fairy sprite in dress of white,  
Who said, with lifted face, "Papa, good night!"

She climbed upon my knee, and kneeling there,  
Lisp'd softly, solemnly, her little prayer;  
Her meeting finger tips,  
Her pure, sweet baby lips,  
Carried my soul with hers, half-unaware,  
Into some clearer and diviner air.

I tried to lift again, but all in vain,  
Of scientific thought the subtle chain,  
So small, so small,  
My learning all;  
Though I could call each star and tell its place,  
My child's "Our Father" bridged the gulf of  
space.

I sat with folded hands at rest, at rest,  
Turning this solemn thought within my breast;  
How faith would fade  
If God had made  
No children in this world—no baby age—  
Only the prudent man or thoughtful sage.

Only the woman wise, no little arms  
To clasp around our neck; no baby charms,  
No loving care,  
No sinless prayer,  
No thrill of lisping song, no pattering feet,  
No infant heart against our heart to beat.

Then if a tiny heart low down,  
Tap at thy heart or door; ah! do not frown;  
    Bend low to meet  
    The little feet,  
To clasp the clinging hand; the child will be  
Nearer to heaven than thee—nearer than thee.



## THREE AND—AN EXTRA.

BY RUDYARD KIPLING.

"When halter and heel ropes are slipped, do not give chase with sticks but with *grain*."—*Punjabi Proverb*.

After marriage arrives a reaction, sometimes a big, sometimes a little one; but it comes sooner or later, and must be tided over by both parties if they desire the rest of their lives to go with the current.

In the case of the Cusack-Bremmils this reaction did not set in till the third year after the wedding. Bremmil was hard to hold at the best of times; but he was a beautiful husband until the baby died and Mrs. Bremmil wore black, and grew thin, and mourned as if the bottom of the Universe had fallen out. Perhaps Bremmil ought to have comforted her. He tried to do so, I think; but the more he comforted the more Mrs. Bremmil grieved, and, consequently, the more uncomfortable Bremmil grew. The fact was that they both needed a tonic. And they got it. Mrs. Bremmil can afford to laugh now, but it was no laughing matter to her at the time.

You see, Mrs. Hauksbee appeared on the horizon; and where she existed was fair chance of trouble. At Simla her by-name was the "Stormy Petrel." She had won that title five times to my own certain

knowledge. She was a little, brown, thin, almost skinny, woman, with big, rolling, violet-blue eyes, and the sweetest manners in the world. You had only to mention her name at afternoon teas for every woman in the room to rise up, and call her—well—*not*—blessed. She was clever, witty, brilliant, and sparkling beyond most of her kind; but possessed of many devils of malice and mischievousness. She could be nice, though, even to her own sex. But that is another story.

Bremmil went off at score after the baby's death and the general discomfort that followed, and Mrs. Hauksbee annexed him. She took no pleasure in hiding her captives. She annexed him publicly, and saw that the public saw it. He rode with her, and walked with her, and talked with her, and picnicked with her, and tiffined at Peliti's with her, till people put up their eyebrows and said: "Shocking!" Mrs. Bremmil stayed at home turning over the dead baby's frocks and crying into the empty cradle. She did not care to do anything else. But some eight dear, affectionate lady-friends explained the situation at length to her in case she should miss the cream of it. Mrs. Bremmil listened quietly, and thanked them for their good offices. She was not as clever as Mrs. Hauksbee, but she was no fool.

She kept her own counsel, and did not speak to Bremmil of what she had heard. This is worth remembering. Speaking to, or crying over, a husband never did any good yet.

When Bremmil was at home, which was not often, he was more affectionate than usual; and that showed his hand. The affection was forced partly to soothe his own conscience and partly to soothe Mrs. Bremmil. It failed in both regards.

Then "the A.-D.-C. in Waiting was commanded by Their Excellencies, Lord and Lady Lytton, to invite Mr. and Mrs. Cusack-Bremmil to Peterhoff on July 26, at 9.30 p. m."—"Dancing" in the bottom-left-hand corner.

"I can't go," said Mrs. Bremmil, "it is too soon after poor little Florrie . . . but it need not stop you, Tom."

She meant what she said then, and Bremmil said that he would go just to put in an appearance. Here he spoke the thing which was not; and Mrs. Bremmil knew it. She guessed—a woman's guess is much more accurate than a man's certainty—that he had meant to go from the first, and with Mrs. Hauksbee. She sat down to think, and the outcome of her thoughts was that the memory of a dead child was worth considerably less than the affections of a living husband. She made her plan and staked

her all upon it. In that hour she discovered that she knew Tom Bremmil thoroughly, and this knowledge she acted on.

"Tom," said she, "I shall be dining out at the Longmores' on the evening of the 26th. You'd better dine at the Club."

This saved Bremmil from making an excuse to get away and dine with Mrs. Hauksbee, so he was grateful, and felt small and mean at the same time—which was wholesome. Bremmil left the house at five for a ride. About half-past five in the evening a large leather-covered basket came in from Phelps' for Mrs. Bremmil. She was a woman who knew how to dress; and she had not spent a week on designing that dress and having it gored, and hemmed, and herring-boned, and tucked and rucked (or whatever the terms are) for nothing. It was a gorgeous dress—slight mourning. I can't describe it, but it was what *The Queen* calls "a creation"—a thing that hit you straight between the eyes and made you gasp. She had not much heart for what she was going to do; but as she glanced at the long mirror she had the satisfaction of knowing that she had never looked so well in her life. She was a large blonde and, when she chose, carried herself superbly.

After the dinner at the Longmores, she went on to the dance—a little late—and

encountered Bremmil with Mrs. Hauksbee on his arm. That made her flush, and as the men crowded round her for dances she looked magnificent. She filled up all her dances except three, and those she left blank. Mrs. Hauksbee caught her eye once; and she knew it was war—real war—between them. She started handicapped in the struggle, for she had ordered Bremmil about just the least little bit in the world too much; and he was beginning to resent it. Moreover, he had never seen his wife look so lovely. He stared at her from doorways, and glared at her from passages as she went about with her partners; and the more he stared, the more taken was he. He could scarcely believe that this was the woman with the red eyes and the black stuff gown who used to weep over the eggs at breakfast.

Mrs. Hauksbee did her best to hold him in play but, after two dances, he crossed over to his wife and asked for a dance.

"I'm afraid you've come too late, Mister Bremmil," she said with her eyes twinkling.

Then he begged her to give him a dance, and, as a great favor, she allowed him the fifth waltz. Luckily 5 stood vacant on his program. They danced it together, and there was a little flutter round the room. Bremmil had a sort of a notion

that his wife could dance, but he never knew she danced so divinely. At the end of that waltz he asked for another—as a favor, not as a right; and Mrs. Bremmil said: “Show me your program, dear!” He showed it as a naughty little schoolboy hands up contraband sweets to a master. There was a fair sprinkling of “H” on it besides “H” at supper. Mrs. Bremmil said nothing, but she smiled contemptuously, ran her pencil through 7 and 9—two “H’s”—and returned the card with her own name written above—a pet name that only she and her husband used. Then she shook her finger at him, and said, laughing: “Oh, you silly, silly boy!”

Mrs. Hauksbee heard that, and—she owned as much—felt she had the worst of it. Bremmil accepted 7 and 9 gratefully. They danced 7, and sat out 9 in one of the little tents. What Bremmil said and what Mrs. Bremmil did is no concern of any one’s.

When the band struck up “The Roast Beef of Old England,” the two went out into the veranda, and Bremmil began looking for his wife’s dandy (this was before ’rickshaw days) while she went into the cloakroom. Mrs. Hauksbee came up and said: “You take me into supper, I think, Mr. Bremmil!” Bremmil turned red and looked foolish: “Ah—h’m! I’m going

home with my wife, Mrs. Hauksbee. I think there has been a little mistake." Being a man, he spoke as though Mrs. Hauksbee were entirely responsible.

Mrs. Bremmil came out of the cloak-room in a swansdown cloak with a white "cloud" round her head. She looked radiant; and she had a right to.

The couple went off into the darkness together, Bremmil riding very close to the dandy.

Then says Mrs. Hauksbee to me—she looked a trifle faded and jaded in the lamp-light: "Take my word for it, the silliest woman can manage a clever man; but it needs a very clever woman to manage a fool."

Then we went in to supper.



## THE LARK'S NEST.

BY AMELIA E. BARR.

The Jay he builds in the high beech top,  
When the spring brings flower and vine;  
The Thrush in the maples swings his nest,  
The Sparrow-Owl builds in the pine—  
Very far up where the fresh winds blow,  
And the branches rock them to and fro.

The bright wee Wren in the thorny hedge  
Has her shelter of wool and leaves;  
And the pilgrim Swallow—kin to man—  
Dwelleth under the house-top eaves;  
And the Oriole hangs her nest so free  
Out on the branch of some lofty tree.

The Raven builds mid the old gray rocks  
Of some wild unplanted place;  
The Eagle challenges with his shriek  
The clouds and the empty space.  
But all their chatter and song and mirth  
Blend with the noise and the stir of earth.

Only the Lark, with his pure fresh song,  
Singeth clear at the angels' gate;  
Far, far higher than any bird's nest  
He singeth both early and late;  
Yea, up in the golden clouds he sings,  
With his dewy breast and sun-lit wings.

Yet the Lark builds low in the meadow-grass,  
Builds under the blowing wheat:  
Many birds' nests are over our heads,  
But the lark's is down at our feet—  
Down where the children's footsteps trod  
The blowing grasses and daisied sod.

## THE GOLDEN RULE.

BY MRS. OLIPHANT.

## I.

The breakfast-room in the vicarage at Leighton-Furness was one of the most cheerful rooms you can imagine, especially at the hour and the meal to which it was devoted. It got all the morning sun, and on a warm morning in May, when the lilacs with which the lawn was surrounded were in full bloom, and the pretty breakfast-table was adorned—as all tables are nowadays—with the flowers of the season, wall-flowers golden and brown, with the dew still on them freshly gathered, making a glow of color among the white china, and filling the room with fragrance, you could not have seen a pleasanter place. And the family gathered round the table was in every way suited to the place. First, the vicar, sixty, hale and hearty, with white hair, which was exceedingly becoming to him, and a fine country color speaking of fresh air and much exercise. Second, his wife, Mrs. Wynyard, ten years younger, very well preserved, who had been a handsome woman in her day; and third, Emily, not, perhaps, to be described in these words, but yet a young woman whose looks were not to be despised, and who

would have been an important member of any household in which she had found herself. It was a special providence, Mrs. Wynyard believed, all things considered, that up to this moment her father's house had pleased her more than any other, and that no suitor had carried her away.

For it need scarcely be said that in this pleasant house everything was not pleasant. Had all been well with them the historian would have had nothing to tell; from whence, no doubt, comes the saying, whether appropriated to countries or to wives, that those are the happiest of whom there is nothing to be said. The post had come in just before the moment at which this episode in their lives opens, and the ladies, as was natural, had thrown themselves upon their letters. The vicar, for his part, had opened his newspaper, which is the natural division—I do not say of labor—in the circumstances. For at sixty a man, and especially a clergyman, gets a little indifferent about his correspondence, which is generally more a trouble than a pleasure; whereas a woman's interest in her letters, even when they are about nothing in particular, never fails.

This morning, however, there was some special interest which made even the vicar's absorption in his newspaper a little fictitious. When Mrs. Wynyard and her

daughter took up the letters, they both in one breath exclaimed "Jack!" throwing aside the other items of their correspondence as if they mattered less than nothing. When he heard that exclamation the vicar looked up from his paper and said, "Well?" sharply, looking from one to another; but receiving no reply after a moment's interval returned, or seemed to return, to his reading. He knew by long experience that Jack's letters generally meant some scrape or other, and he was relieved when he got no answer; but still, I think, his newspaper for the moment was more or less a pretence.

Jack was not a son appropriate to a vicarage: he was not of the kind of those who are their father's favorite and their mother's joy. How it is that this comes to pass, who can tell? With everything to lead him to do well, every tradition and habit of life in his favor, he had not done well. He should have been ready to step into the vicarage in his father's place, for it was a sort of family living, securing many good things to the fortunate inheritor. But it was soon found that this was out of the question; not in the way which is most respectable and even superior nowadays, entitling a young man to the interest and admiration of everybody—that of religious doubts and scruples—but in a more vulgar

way, which secures nobody's interest. He had not managed even to take his degree; he had done nothing that he ought to have done: and, instead of being in orders or at the bar, or a fellow of his college, all which would have been things reasonable and to be expected, he was in a merchant's office in London, sadly against his will, and against all the prepossessions of his family. But what was he, then, to do? Jack had nothing to suggest: what he would have liked would have been to do nothing at all, but, failing that, he did not mind what it was. It was considered a great piece of luck when his father's old friend, Mr. Bullock, took him into his office at an age when young men are not generally taken into offices, and for a time it was supposed that Jack was going to do very well. But in an evil hour Mr. Bullock sent him on a commercial mission to America, in which Jack was not successful—perhaps because he thought a voyage like that was chiefly a frolic; perhaps for other causes. He had not been successful, but yet, when he returned home (considerably after the time at which he ought to have returned home) he was not dismissed because of his employer's affection for his father. Mr. Bullock, however, took an opportunity of telling the vicar privately that Jack would not do anything in business.

"He may make his own living as a poor clerk," the merchant said, "which is a dreary thing to look forward to. I gave him a chance, but he hasn't taken it. I felt it my duty to tell you, Wynyard: if you can find anything else for him where he may do better, don't hesitate to take him away."

The vicar knew very well this meant that his commercial friend would be glad to get rid of Jack, but he did not take the hint.

"It is always something that he should be making his living," he said, and Mr. Bullock was too great a friend of the Wynyards to send their boy away.

But Jack got on worse than ever after that unsuccessful attempt. As for making his living, his mother knew how many little things there were to be made up. It was a knowledge which the ladies of the family kept as far as they could from his father. But when he got into any bad scrape this was not possible, so that all the members of the family were a little afraid, as well as eager, to see what was in Jack's letters when they came. They did not come very often, and two in one day was a thing which probably had never happened before: the scrape must be graver than usual to warrant such an effort on his part, they all thought. Each of the recipients gave a little gasp on opening her special communication, but neither said anything,

which at first was an ease to the vicar's mind. But the letters were long (another wonder), and after a while he became impatient. When Emily had reached the fourth page of hers, which her father saw, in some miraculous way, through the *Times*, he put down his paper altogether and again said, "Well?" in a still sharper tone.

"Oh, papa! the most wonderful news," Emily said.

"Well?" cried Mrs. Wynyard, not to be behind, "I can't tell you if it is well or not, but it is something, at least, that I never thought I should live to see."

"It may be the making of him, mother," cried Emily.

"Or his ruin," Mrs. Wynyard said.

"What is it," cried the vicar, bringing down his fist on the table, "in the name of ——?"

It was only to be expected from a vicar that he should never use any bad words: and neither did he make a free use of those that are too good for common use, and which sound profane, even when authorized, as some people think, by his cloth. But he had a habit of going very near the edge, as if he were about to say them, which had often an impressive effect.

"Papa—I don't know how to tell you—Jack has got engaged."

"Oh, stop, Charles, stop! wait till you hear. Don't say anything rash. To a lady whom he met in America (I knew there was some reason for his staying so long in America)—a lady—who is rolling in money, Charles!"

The vicar had his mouth opened to make a remark when he was stopped by his wife; indeed, he had more than half made it before he could stop himself. "The confounded foo—!" Being arrested, he brought himself up with a run and a gasp.

"Wait till you hear it rightly!" cried his wife. "He met her in some out-of-the-way place; don't you remember he did say something about an out-of-the-way place, Emily? and fell in love with her. But, poor boy, he was too honorable to speak. How could he, knowing he had nothing? It is that that has made him so unsettled. Didn't I always say there was something, Emily,—something we didn't know?"

"As for that," said the vicar, getting his breath, "there are probably hundreds of things we don't know."

"Oh, Charles, don't be so harsh; when now there is every appearance——. Her father has come over with her, and has called at the office. They've taken a house in the country, and they've asked Jack to stay with them."

"But more, more, far more!" cried

Emily, crimson with excitement; "he has proposed—and has been accepted, papa."

"Are you sure you are not dreaming all this?" the vicar said. "Look again; there must be some mistake."

"There is no mistake at all; read it yourself," said Mrs. Wynyard, thrusting the letter into his hands. "Of course it is for you as much as me. He says a pretty creature, with those wonderful complexions American girls are said to have, and with heaven only knows how much money; oh, I don't wonder your father is flurried; I cannot get my breath myself."

"It may be the making of him, mother!"

"If it isn't the other thing," Mrs. Wynyard said.

"How could it be the other thing? when we have always said between ourselves that a wife, a nice wife, who had sense——, if it were ever possible that he could be able to marry, would be the saving of Jack!"

"Ah, yes," said Mrs. Wynyard, "if he could have had an income to marry on—an income of his own; but if the money is all on the woman's side, and a father to look after her, to tie it up. Oh, it isn't that I am for money, though I see the great, great advantage. But would she take all the trouble with him if it was like that?"

"She would love to take the trouble," said Emily. "Could she be happy if he

were not happy—and right?" she added in an undertone.

The vicar glanced over the letter while this conversation was going on. He did not read it line by line, but jumped at the meaning, having had it already explained to him. And for a moment his heart rose lightly in his breast. To have Jack provided for, suddenly made independent, no longer a trouble and anxiety to everybody belonging to him, but with a home, an income, a keeper (so to speak) of his own! The vicar's heart gave a leap of relief and delight. No more responsibility. It would be his wife's business to look after him, and nobody could do that as well as a wife. And then the money. Even without the money, if there had been any chance that Jack could ever have enough to live upon, they had all been agreed that a wife might be the making of him. That meant, I fear, that she (poor soul! the problematical wife) would take the anxiety off the shoulders of his parents, that she would put herself between Jack and harm, and perhaps cure him, and bring him right—a thing which it is known women have undertaken to do, and have done *tant bien que mal*, and made life possible, before now. This was an aspiration they had all breathed, never expecting, however, that it would come to pass—and to see it suddenly

realized, and with money added, that would make it all the more sure! A beautiful vision rose before the vicar's mind—of a time when there would be no anxiety about Jack, no remittances to send him, no dreadful news of dismissal to be looked for, or any other anxiety of that kind; no call upon every available penny to make up for some misadventure: but peace and happiness, and some one to watch over him wherever he went. The money, indeed, was a great thing, but the guardian, the companion, the some one to watch over him, that was the thing of all.

But then the vicar put down the letter, and those heartstrings, which had so relaxed and been sensible of the happiest loosening and ease, tightened all at once again. He put his elbows on the table, and his face in his hands. The ladies were silent, thinking that he was thanking God. But, when he looked up after that pause, his face was not the face of a man glorified by thanksgiving. The old lines were all drawn again round his anxious eyes.

"Jane," he said, "and you, Emily, listen to me. We talk every day, don't we, about doing to our neighbors as we would that our neighbors should do to us?"

"Surely," said Mrs. Wynyard, a little dismayed, though she scarcely knew why: for to have her assent required to such a

proposition, at such a moment, was the strangest thing in the world.

The vicar's ruddy countenance had grown quite pale.

"If a man should come asking to marry Emily, and his people concealed—necessary facts from us—hoping she would be the saving of him——"

Then there passed a dreadful moment of silence in that glowing room, so bright with sunshine. The three looked in each other's faces—they were as if they had been struck dumb.

"Oh, Charles, Charles!" said Mrs. Wynyard, and began to cry; "Oh, papa!"

It was a name she still sometimes called him, in kindness, for the children's sakes.

"Father," said Emily, faltering, "in such cases people judge for themselves. They hate any one who interferes——"

"As you would that men should do unto you, do you also unto them," the vicar replied.

"If it was my case," she cried, coloring high, "I should not believe a word!"

"Oh, papa," repeated his wife, "papa! you will not say anything! Your own son, and perhaps the only hope."

"Father, if he was responsible for a woman's happiness—he has never had any responsibility: and if he loses her—as he says——"

"And he always had the kindest heart!" cried Mrs. Wynyard, among her tears.

"Get me the time-table," said the vicar; "at least they must judge for themselves. I am going to town by the next train."

## II.

The vicar was asked into a handsome room in a hotel somewhere in Mayfair. He had got the address from Jack, who gave it with suspicion and reluctance, not knowing what his father could mean, or what he wanted dashing up to town like this.

"Do you mean to tell me you're engaged to Miss Boldero?" the vicar said.

"Why, yes; of course we are engaged. Should I have written to the mater about it, do you think, if it hadn't been true? But you never believe a word I say," Jack answered, with a certain defiance.

"I believe this, Jack, since you say it to my face. Does this girl know anything about you?"

"This girl! You might be more civil to my betrothed. Of course she knows everything she has any call to know about me——"

"And she has a father?"

"She has a father," said Jack, beginning to feel there was trouble in the air.

"It is right that he and I should talk the matter over," said the vicar.

"If it's about money," said Jack, more and more alarmed, "they know I've got no money; there is no use entering upon that."

"There is use in entering upon—a great many things," the vicar said.

"Father, what do you mean? You are not going to—you don't mean to—spoil my chance!" cried the young man, "the only chance I ever may have in my life!"

The vicar said nothing. He gave his boy a look that silenced Jack. When had his father spoiled a chance, or taken a hope away from him? But there was nothing more to be said to him now.

It was a handsome room for a room in a hotel, being the best; and in the corner near the great window which commanded a glimpse of Piccadilly, there was seated a young lady alone—a tall girl, with fair hair frizzed upon her forehead, an unexceptionable toilette, and a clear-cut imperious face. There is something a little faulty, something peculiar, in the American mouth. Heaven knows all our mouths are faulty in all nations—it is the peccant feature everywhere. In France they say it of the English, whose long teeth are a frequent subject of mockery: but the American mouth has a character specially its

own. It is a little harsh, the merest trifle in the world underhanging—nay, too slight for any such decided expression; let us say with the under lip the least in the world protruding beyond its fellow—

“Her lips were thin,  
Except the one was next the chin.”

But, on the other hand, that is too complimentary, for the underlip was as thin as the other, only put forward a hair's breadth. It is the result, I suppose, in the young feminine subject of having things too much her own way. She was looking at the vicar's card, which he had sent up, when he entered the room, and she said, with a little start, but without rising—

“Mr. Wynyard, Leighton-Furness Vicarage. Goodness! You are Jack's papa!”

“Yes, I am Jack's papa,” said the vicar, half astonished, half confused—half, nay, not half, for three halves cannot be—but the very least bit amused. He took the hand she held out to him and held it for a moment. She looked a creature who might do this thing—imperious, not hesitating or counting the cost, whatever she might take into her head.

“And you also have a papa,” said the vicar.

“Yes; I suppose Jack has told you all about us—how we met him, and how we

did this bold thing and came after him here?"

"He did not say you had come after him. I should have been very angry if he had."

"Why? it is quite true. I liked him—I don't feel the least ashamed—better than any man I have seen; and I thought, perhaps, it was the money kept him back. You are so ridiculously poor in this country. Why are you so poor? So we came after him, papa and I——"

"Was papa aware of—of what I may call the object of the journey?" said the vicar, not knowing whether to laugh out, which, perhaps, she would not have liked, or what to do.

"Oh," said this young lady, "I never hide anything from papa."

"He is not in, I fear," said the vicar.

"Yes, he is in; do you want him? Tell me first before I let you see him what are you going to tell him about Jack?"

"My dear young lady, the two fathers must certainly be permitted to talk such a matter over."

"No," said the girl, "unless you tell me first what you are going to tell him about Jack."

"I am going to speak to him very seriously," said the vicar. "It is a very serious thing to confide the happiness of a girl like you to a young man you scarcely know."

"Oh!" she said, "that's taking it the wrong way about—confiding his happiness to me, you mean. Oh, I am not at all afraid; I'll make him happy. You need not make yourself miserable about that."

The vicar pressed his hat—a hat which had a rosette, as somebody has said, a sort of daisy in it, for he was a rural dean, whatever that may be—between his hands. The girl's eyes were fixed upon that little symbol of ecclesiastical rank. She interrupted him before he could say any more.

"What is that for?—that thing in your hat? You are perfectly delightful for a papa-in-law. You make me more and more satisfied that I came."

"My dear," said the vicar, feeling that his virtue was stealing away from him under these blandishments, "I must see your father."

"Why?" she said. "I am sure I will do better. It is I that am to marry Jack, and not father. I'll hear what you have got to say."

"I called on Mr. Boldero," he said, more and more anxiously; "permit me to ring and ask if he is in the hotel."

"Oh, he is in the next room," she said, "but he would not come in, of course, when he heard I was talking to somebody. Father!" she said, raising her voice.

A door opened, and a tall man put in his

head. "Do you want me, Childie?" he said.

"I don't want you; but here is a gentleman who wants you. It is Mr. Wynyard, papa; Jack's father."

"I am happy to make your acquaintance, sir," said Mr. Boldero.

Both father and daughter spoke with an accent which was extremely piquant to the vicar. He had scarcely ever encountered any of their country-folk before, and he was extremely curious about them, and would, had his mind been less deeply engaged, have been greatly amused and delighted with their unaccustomed ways. Mr. Boldero was clad very solemnly in black, and doubtless had other peculiarities besides his accent; but the vicar was not at sufficient ease to remark them.

"I heard only this morning," he said, "of the engagement—if it is an engagement—between your daughter and my son Jack; and I came up to town instantly to see you."

"If it is an engagement!" said Miss Boldero with indignation.

"Well, sir, and have you any objection?" said the other father.

"Will you grant me an interview, Mr. Boldero?"

"With pleasure; isn't this an interview? Fire away," said Miss Boldero's papa.

The vicar did not know what to say. He

sat still for a moment with the spirit gone out of him. Then he murmured almost with a supplicating tone, "I meant a private interview, Mr. Boldero."

"Oh," said the American, "I have no secrets from my Childie here. She's full of sense, and always gives me her advice. Besides, if it is anything about Jack, it is she that has the best right to hear."

The poor vicar stared blankly in the face of this man, who, being a man and his own contemporary, ought surely to have understood him. He had thought that no man could have been more surprised than he had been this morning by the news of Jack's engagement. But he was more surprised now.

"My dear sir," he said, "it is impossible that I can say what I have to say in the presence of Miss Boldero——"

"Oh, never mind me," said the young lady. "He has come to tell you something against Jack, papa. I ought to be here——"

"It will be more fair," said Mr. Boldero.

"It is just simply indispensable," said his daughter.

The vicar felt the obstinacy of despair come into his being. He said—

"This is a very serious matter; I must talk to you alone. For heaven's sake grant me ten minutes when your child's happi-

ness is at stake. It is not all such easy work, such plain sailing as you seem to think."

"Father," said Miss Boldero, "if he tells you Jack has another wife living or anything of that sort, promise me you'll not believe him."

She raised herself slowly from her seat.

"No, I'll not believe him without proof."

"I shan't, with volumes of proof. But I'll go away, though I consider it very uncivil and just like an Englishman to treat a woman in this contemptuous way. You said ten minutes, Mr. Wynyard. I'll come back in ten minutes to hear what all this fuss is about."

The young lady retired accordingly. She had a fine, graceful figure, and moved languidly, swinging a little to one side and another as some tall people do; and she went no further than to the next room, where it would not have been difficult to hear all that passed. But one could not see that young person and suspect her of listening at a door.

"Well," said Mr. Boldero, "out with it now. Is there another wife living? I'll have to see all the papers before I'll believe that of Jack."

"Another wife!" cried the vicar. "God bless my soul, what can you be thinking of? Jack is not a villain!"

"Then there is not another wife? Well, that's a relief. What was a man to think? You're so dreadfully in earnest. If it ain't that, it's all right."

"But it is not all right," said the vicar.

"Mr. Boldero, do you know my son has not a penny?—that is, there will be a mere trifle when we are both dead, his mother and I; but she's young yet, thank God. Stop a moment! And he is only a clerk in my friend Bullock's office, earning little, and, it breaks my heart to say, deserving little."

"An idle young dog; more fond of pleasure than of work. One can see as much as that, having, as you may say, the pleasure of his acquaintance, with half an eye."

"And there is more behind," said the vicar, very pale. "Don't make me blame my own boy more than I can help. God knows what it costs me to speak, but I can't let—the happiness of another young creature—be thrown away."

"Meaning Childie," said Mr. Boldero. "She's pretty well able to look after that herself. Hullo! you're not feeling faint, are you? Stop a moment; I've got something handy here."

"Never mind," said the vicar, waving him away. "Never mind; I'm all right. Mr. Boldero, do you understand what I say? Can I say anything stronger to make

you understand? I dare not let you trust your daughter's happiness to Jack without telling you——”

“Here, old man, take this, and sit down and keep quiet till you come to yourself.”

And to tell the truth a mist was coming over the vicar's eyes. He laid his head back, and the room seemed to be gyrating round him. His heart was beating loud in his ears, and the tall figure standing before him with a glass in its hand seemed some kind of solemn demon tempting him to an unknown fate. He swallowed what was given to him, however, and slowly came to himself—the walls sinking into the perpendicular, and the tall American in his black coat becoming recognizable once more.

“You want to know, now, I suppose,” said the other father, “how the young folks are to live? I'm pretty comfortably off, and she's all I have in the world.”

“Are you sure you understand me? Do you know what I mean?” said the vicar in despair.

“I know what you say fast enough; but what you mean is beyond me: unless it be to put a spoke in your son's wheel: which is more than I can understand, I'll allow.”

The vicar did not say a word. They would think it at home, too, that he had tried to put a spoke in his son's wheel; and Jack

would think it with more reason. But he felt that he had not another word to say.

"Have you got anything more to tell me in this hole-and-corner way?" the other father asked.

The vicar shook his head. "What does it matter what I have to say, when you won't believe me?" he said.

"Then I reckon I may as well have her back. Here, Childie," said Mr. Boldero.

And the door opened widely, and the young lady sailed in. "Well, papa," she said.

"Well, Childie. This old gentleman wants us to understand that his son is a bad lot, earns no money to speak of, and deserves less; is just good for nothing as far as I can make him out, not fit to be trusted with your happiness, he says."

"Father," said Miss Boldero, "who is talking of trusting Jack with my happiness? Is it the woman that asks the man to make her happy, or the man that asks the woman?"

"As a matter of fact it's the man; but I don't know that it always holds good. I must allow there is a doubt on that."

"There is no doubt in my mind," said the young lady. "Jack's happiness is going to be trusted to me, and I'll take care of it. If Mr. Wynyard has any objection to me he has got a right to say it."

"I ain't quite so clear of that," said Mr.

Boldero. "Jack's of age; he's a man, and he has a right to choose for himself. The old gentleman has no call to have any voice in it."

Now, the vicar had gone on for a long time hearing himself called the "old gentleman," and had borne it; though at sixty, when a man is well and strong, it is an appellation which he feels to be half ludicrous and half injurious. But at last the moment had come when he could bear no more.

"The old gentleman," he said, "as you call me, has no desire to have a veto on his son's choice. You are a very pretty young lady, and charming, I am sure. But I don't know what are your other qualities, Miss Boldero. You must excuse me if I go now, for I have said everything I have to say."

"Go!" cried the girl, "without even having your luncheon!—you, who are going to be my papa-in-law?"

"Or a drink," said her father. "Yes, I had to give him a drink, or he would have fainted on my hands. Sir—if I must not call you an old gentleman—I'm a great one for knowing motives. What was your meaning in coming here to-day?"

"His meaning, of course, was to make acquaintance with me, papa, and see what sort of girl I was."

"Childie, let alone with your talk for one short moment, and let him speak."

The vicar stood up, and would have gone away if he could; but the tall, black figure opposite barred the way, and demanded an answer. And, indeed, the answer was hard to give; for a man somehow finds it very hard to say that he has done anything, whatever it may be, simply from the highest motive of all. The vicar felt this deeply, though he was an old gentleman, and though to be religious was, as you may say, his profession. He was often not at all abashed to avow a mean motive; but when you think of it, it requires a great deal of courage to claim to be carrying out the charge of the Gospel. When he spoke his voice faltered, and his ruddy old face was like a rose. "Sir," he replied, adopting, without knowing it, the style of his questioner, "I have been preaching all my life what my Master said, 'Whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.'"

There was a little pause in the room, and though the rattle of the carriages in the streets, and the sound of the men with the flowers calling, "All a-blowing and a-growing," came in very distinctly, yet the effect was as if you could have heard a pin fall. The boldest held his breath for a time—that is to say, even Miss Boldero,

though she was not quite clear what it was all about, did not say a word. At last—

“That gentleman’s Jack’s father, Childie,” said Mr. Boldero slowly. “I’m not in the running with the likes of him. If you don’t train that fellow up to do his father credit, I’ll never believe in you again.”

“I will, papa,” said the girl, as if she were making a vow.

\* \* \* \* \*

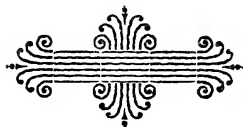
Jack Wynyard strolled in in the afternoon, very carefully dressed, with a flower in his coat, but with much trouble in his mind. Why did his father come up to town so suddenly? What was it he was so anxious to say? The young man’s conscience told him pretty clearly what it was, and he went to the hotel to fulfill his engagement with his betrothed, expecting little but to be met by her father, and sent about his business, as the result of what his own father had said.

But no such reception awaited him. He found Miss Boldero in her prettiest toilette waiting for him. “And oh, Jack,” said that young lady, “there has been the sweetest old gentleman here with a button in his hat, saying all sorts of things about you. He said you were not fit to be trusted with my happiness, and I said no; but I was to be trusted with yours. And we are going

down to the vicarage to stay; do you hear, to stay, and make acquaintance with everything. And papa has fallen fathoms deep in love with him. And you are to behave, sir, like a saint or an angel, or I will lose all my credit with everybody from this day."

The vicar went home, I need not say, with a load lifted from his heart. He had delivered his soul, and yet he had not injured Jack. But that was because the people whom he had warned, in the discharge of his bounden duty, were such people as never were.

"They know everything at least," he said to his wife and Emily, who met him with much anxiety at the gate, both of them looking ten years older. "I have not concealed anything from them. But how it will all end God knows."



## SPLICED.

BY I. F. MAYO.

Eh, but it's grand to sit at one's door with one's  
own wife at one's side,  
A-showing her what she ought to know—how a  
ship-shape knot is tied:  
See the ropes be equally matched, lass. A wisp  
and a cable won't splice;  
For tie 'em as neat as you may, the weaker will  
give in a trice.

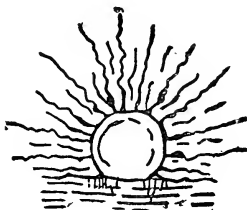
(That's just what the Good Book means, Kate,  
when it says that two will not speed,  
Who set out to travel together, yet are in nothing  
agreed.)  
But take two ropes like these now—this is softer,  
you see, but it's tough,  
And that is as good in its way, though it feels a  
little more rough.

Now twist 'em and twirl 'em—and there!—What,  
couldn't you follow my hand?  
Strange! how it's easy to do, what's not easy to  
understand!  
'Twas easy our falling in love—but ask how we  
did it, and why?  
You may answer (for women are clever!) but I  
can't tell you, not I!

Then to make sure that the ropes are spliced, just  
tug 'em at either end,  
If the knot be right, and the ropes be sound,  
there will be nor slip nor rend;  
There will be, as it were, one rope, only stronger  
because it's two,  
And that's the way it's to always be, my Katie,  
with me and you!

The tugs will come, lass, as sure as life, when  
young days will pass away,  
When duties will thicken around us, while our  
heads grow bowed and gray;  
For though knots be tied in the sunshine, Kate,  
they're meant to hold in a gale:  
And from all that we see around us, life isn't a  
summer sail!

And the time must come at last, Kate, when all  
knots will dip out of sight,  
One of the strings drawn safely in God's haven  
of love and light,  
But one of 'em still left dragging in life's ocean  
rough and cold,—  
Yet the watch may sing out "All's well!" Kate,  
for Our Father's knots will hold!



## OLD MAIDS.

They both loved him. Perhaps they had seen few other men, and hearts will love if they be true hearts. The three had grown together and their games had surprised them by becoming real, as Pygmalion's statue became a woman. His heart alone was free, and it swung like a pendulum between the two. Now he would incline to the tender quiet of the elder, now to the bright mirth of the younger. He had not strength to renounce either love.

It was jealousy that at last made him think he cared more for the younger, for another came whose eyes followed her and whose heart was in his eyes. So he asked her to be his wife and she—she said, "Yes" to-night, but "No" to-morrow, for to-morrow she remembered not only her love for him but her sister's claim to love. So she strangled the love in her heart for the sake of that other love.

Piqued by her refusal he carried his heart to her sister, and she, in the first flush of joy, she too said "Yes," and drew her breath and said "No." So he departed angry at both. When he came again he had married a wife, and the two sisters kept their two precious love-secrets in their

hearts, loving each other more and more by reason of the sacrifice.

And that sisterly love kept them young when their hair was grey, and when death took them he divorced them not, for they passed away on the same quiet autumn day.



FAINT HEART NE’ER WON FAIR  
LADY.

BY LILLIAS CAMPBELL DAVIDSON.

“A hat of last year’s fashion!”

“But her eyes were like grey stars.”

“And her manner dreadfully quick and decided.”

“Bright and sparkling, I should call it.”

“My dear Richard, you are really absurd! The girl is a hospital nurse, and what woman with any refinement or delicacy would take up such a profession as that? It shows she can’t be nice.”

“Ladies do such things now-a-days”—less defiantly.

“Now you know you’re only saying so because she’s pretty. Of course ladies do queer things now-a-days, but that doesn’t excuse an unwomanly feeling. Besides, she’s only a solicitor’s daughter. I shan’t ask mamma to call.”

“But don’t you think common civility——”

“No, I don’t. She’s only staying at the Rectory, and we’re not forced to call on every one’s friends. Besides, Captain Hardwicke is expected home, and it would make it awkward. What would one of Lord Belmont’s people say if we asked them to meet a girl like Miss Travers?”

"All the same, she's as pretty and lady-like as any one I ever met in these parts."

"Very likely, but she's not in our set. Now, Richard, if you say any more, I shall begin to think you're falling in love with her, if the idea is not too absurd."

But Richard had closed the drawing-room door upon his six sisters' languid voices, and was half-way across the wide lawn with its brilliant parterres of summer flowers. Poor Richard Allerdyce!—only son of the richest banker in Chellowdean, people of good family, but with just that uncertainty of social position which made them afraid of overstepping any boundaries, rather gratified at being on intimate terms with Lord Belmont and the Hardwickses,—he was of divided mind this summer afternoon. He had been greatly taken by that sweet face and slight figure in the Rectory pew last Sunday; was sensible of a thrill of more than civil interest when he met their owner walking home with the good old rector after service, and was introduced to "Miss Travers," while the eyes "like grey stars" were suddenly raised to his; and he had ever since spent a larger portion of his time than was strictly needful in walking past the Rectory's rose-covered garden gate. But, on the other side, his sisters' words had certainly struck home.

Brought up, as all the Allerdyces were, like hot-house plants, sheltered from every breath of frosty air, it was not strange that Richard at five-and-twenty, though a big, burly enough young Englishman to look at, was but little of a man in mind or heart. Knowledge of the world had been carefully kept from him, as from his sisters, lest they should learn evil; but their very ignorance had cost them the loss of power to choose between evil and good, and had given them weak prejudices and conceited opinionativeness, instead of a mind able to discern and prefer the right.

Richard's handsome face was overcast as he swung out of the lodge gates, and down the road. Miss Travers a hospital nurse! certainly it was a shock. Not only did it seem to him unwomanly for a woman to work at all, but infinitely more so to do menial work. And then the awful thought of what his mother and sisters would say, were they asked to receive a hospital nurse as his future wife! For it had gone as far as that in Richard's susceptible mind, even in these three short days. All at once his thoughts broke off as Miss Travers herself, sweet and bright as ever, in her black dress, came out from the Rectory gate, the great Rectory mastiff pacing behind her.

Now Richard's own collie was at his master's heels, and there was a border feud

of long standing between those two faithful followers. There was one angry growl, a heavy rush, a thud, and then a brown body and a black rolled together in the dust in a manner suggestive of a dog's funeral on one side or the other. Richard, who was actually staggered by the suddenness of it all, could not for a moment regain his senses; and when he did, it was to find Miss Travers, both white hands locked in the hair of Rollo's shaggy neck, pulling him from his foe with all her strength, and calling to "Mr. Alledyce" to "take hold of his dog and pull him off."

She was being whirled round in the cloud of dust by the frantic waltzers before Richard could quite settle where to "take hold," but that task was performed for him by a gentleman in tweed knickerbockers, who started out of the "White Hart," a few yards away, and ran to the rescue. Between Miss Travers and himself the combatants were separated, each carrying away a few fragments of the other's person; and Miss Travers, flushed, panting, covered with dust, but looking lovelier than Richard had ever seen woman look before, sank back against the Rectory wall and tried to laugh. The stranger lifted his hat, looking straight at her with a pair of piercing brown eyes.

"Excuse me, Miss Travers!" he said, in rather an offhand manner, "but that was about as rash a thing as any one could possibly do. The dogs might both have turned on you and bitten you badly."

"Thank you, Captain Hardwicke, I had not the least fear," was her only response, given with a little haughtiness; and the gentleman, with a nod to Richard, turned and strode away as rapidly as he had come.

"Miss Travers! are you hurt?" Richard was able to articulate at last. "You never should have done a thing like that; Hardwicke was right; it was awfully rash! By the way, you know Hardwicke?"

"No, I'm not hurt a bit." The wonderful grey eyes were dancing with fun now. "Don't scold me, please; I know it was a silly thing to do, but I didn't stop to think. Pray don't look so horrified!"

"But if you had been bitten!"

"Well, I wasn't." And her face dimpled with a friendly smile at his shocked look.

"But you know Hardwicke?" he persisted, unable to get over his surprise in that quarter.

"Oh, yes." Her face grew cold instantly. "Captain Hardwicke was in hospital with an accident some months ago—my hospital. I had charge of him there, that's all." And she pulled a rose so sharply from the hedge, that it fell to pieces in her hands.

"Look there!" she laughed, showering the petals on the ground before her; "let us cover over the battlefield with flowers," and she laughed again.

Richard went home more thoughtful than ever. Surely this woman was a novel thing in his experience of men and manners. She acted with the skill and daring of a man; and yet he would rather not think what his sisters' faces would be like had they but seen it! Was it actually lady-like? or should she not rather have fled from the scene of conflict, or even have screamed and fainted? To be sure, she had looked as beautiful as an avenging Amazon; but was it quite correct conduct for a girl? And Captain Hardwicke's manner, so abrupt and dictatorial; he seemed to show her the difference in social position between a nobleman's nephew and a hospital nurse. It must have been an awkward meeting, as his sisters had said. And then a cold shiver came over him, as he thought of Miss Travers introduced as Mrs. Richard Allerdyce at Belmont Castle, and Captain Hardwicke's stony stare of surprise. And yet—and yet—she was so beautiful.

Nearly three weeks had passed since the dog episode, and Richard's courage still wavered in the balance. He had grown to know Miss Travers well in those three

weeks, and to know her well was but to love her better. There was never a woman so sweet, so clever, so sympathetic, so beautiful—he was certain of that—no woman he more ardently longed to have for his own; and yet—and yet! That terrible strength of character, that profession, that lack of pedigree! Only last night, in the moonlit Rectory garden, he had almost flung all prudence to the winds, she had been so dangerously, fatally sweet (she was always especially kind to him), but he reeled back from the gulf just in time when she mentioned casually, without a change of voice or countenance, that she had an uncle who was a chemist in Rochester. “A chemist! Shades of my ancestors, protect me!” Richard recoiled again as he thought of it, and fancied Hardwicke’s look if he could have heard her. For Captain Hardwicke was still at the “White Hart,” and perhaps his presence, and the atmosphere of exalted society about him, had been one of Richard’s restraining though unconscious influences. Now, as he slowly worked his way up the steepest hill in the neighborhood, on his new tricycle, he was pondering the old question in his mind. Could he take the fatal plunge, or was it too costly?

A trim graceful figure on the road before him, as at last he gained the summit,

drove all else to the four winds; and in an instant he had overtaken the object of his cogitations, and sprung to the ground beside her.

"Mr. Allerdyce!" she said, turning with her own bright look to shake hands; "how like a ghost you stole upon me! Oh, I see, it was on a tricycle, and what a beauty! Do let me look at it." And Richard, nothing loth, began to display his new toy—a perfect thing in build and finish—the Allerdyces' possessions always were the most perfect of their kind.

He began to explain it to her, forgetting all about the chemist uncle, but she interrupted him.

"Yes, I know all about them, thanks. I see, it is a regular bit of perfection. I should so like to try it; may I?"

Once more Richard was dumb with surprise. A lady on a tricycle was as yet an unheard-of thing in rustic Chellowdean, and it seemed an outrageous idea to him.

"I really don't think you could," he faltered. "My sisters never have done such a thing."

"Your sisters? oh, perhaps not," with a little smile at the idea. "But I am quite used to tricycles. I ride one whenever I can get a chance."

Further blow for Richard; but there was no knowing how to refuse her, and he

stood aside. She took her place like one who was thoroughly used to tricycles, and he could not but admit she adorned her position.

"What a delicious hill to run down!" she said with a happy little laugh, as she placed her dainty feet on the treadles. "I really must try it."

"Pray, pray don't attempt it!" was Richard's horrified remonstrance, for the hill stretched down even more abruptly than on the side he had ascended, and near the bottom there was a sudden sharp turn, with the railway line running just below—the nastiest bit of road for miles around. Perhaps even Agatha Travers would have hesitated to hazard it, had it not been for the consternation in Richard's face.

"Mr. Allerdyce, you are faint-hearted," she said gaily, as she started on her downward course—a little more rapidly than she had at first intended, but Richard's new tricycle ran smoothly. His heart was in his mouth, as the country folk say, as she began to glide rapidly off. She turned her head, and flashed back a merry defiance. "My uncle, the chemist at Rochester, used to say"—Then the wicked sparkle faded suddenly, and she called quick and clear, "Can you stop me, please? The brake is stiff; I can't make it work! it's running away."

Poor Richard of the faint heart! it seemed to die within him. The next second he had darted forward, but it was just one second too late. The check she had been able to put on the heavy machine with the treadles ceased to keep it back, and faster and faster it tore down the perilous road.

In all his life to come, Richard will never know any minute so long as that next, while the straight slight figure flying through space seemed to swim before his eyes, and his knees knocked together as he stood.

On, on—faster, faster! she managed somehow to cling to the steering handle, and keep the machine in the middle of the road; but the mad pace grew more desperate. She could never turn that fatal corner by the railway embankment; over it she must go. And it was just then that Richard and she both together saw the puff of snow-white smoke from the hill-side, that told them the evening express was out of the tunnel, and thundering down that very bit of line.

It all flashed over Agatha in one rush: would the fall kill her, or would it be the train? it must be one or the other: the next second or two would settle that; and a swift prayer was on her lips, but what she never quite knew; for even as she

breathed it, some one or something in brown tweed knickerbockers hurled itself over the road-side stile before her, a stout stick darted into the flying wheel, and with one quick swerve the tricycle crashed into the ditch, and lay there, a confused mass of spinning spokes and mutilated tires, while Agatha flew out from its midst like a ball, and alighted on a grassy bank a yard or two away; and the express rushed past with a wild yell on the line just below, and vanished round a sharp curve that matched the road above it.

Then, and then alone, did Richard's legs regain their power of motion; and he set off as fast as they could carry him to where the little black figure lay. Somehow it took longer to run down that hill than the last descent would have led one to think; for when Richard, panting and breathless, reached the scene of the accident, the little black figure, very much out of its usual trim neatness, was seated on the grassy tangle that broke her fall, busily binding up with her own small handkerchief a deep gash in the hand of the knickerbockered person who knelt at her side. It was a very pale face that looked up at Richard's, with the sort of awe that any human creature must wear who has just been face to face with death; but her great grey eyes had a wonderful shining light in them.

"The poor tricycle!" she said; "I am so sorry. Is it very badly hurt?" And, in the fervor of his relief and gladness, Richard could find words for nothing but—

"Bother the tricycle!"

He was ready enough to say something, however, presently, when he found himself obliged to stop and see its remains decently cared for, while Captain Hardwicke took charge of Miss Travers' return to the Rectory. She said she was none the worse for her fall, but perhaps she was a little shaken; but Captain Hardwicke kindly offered her his arm, and she took it. Richard hurried after them before long, his whole heart aglow. That awful minute this afternoon had taught him that life without Agatha Travers would seem a poor and worthless thing, were she a factory-girl. He hurried after them, therefore, and came in sight of the Rectory gate as two hands, one very neatly bandaged, unclasped over it, and a small dark head raised itself swiftly from a brown tweed shoulder, where it seemed to have been resting.

"Good gracious!" was all Richard could utter, as Agatha vanished, and Captain Hardwicke, looking odiously radiant, sauntered towards him.

"Ah, Allerdyce, old fellow, caught us, have you? Then I may as well tell you all

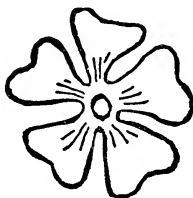
my tremendous good luck at once, and take your congratulations. Perhaps you've heard how Miss Travers' nursing saved my life last year, and when of course I fell in love with her, as who wouldn't? She would have it, it was only gratitude, and refused to let me make what she called a misalliance, just because there's that brute of a title coming to me some day. I told her I thought all that rubbish was obsolete, and offered to drop the title altogether if she liked; but nothing would do, and we parted rather out of temper. I heard she was down here, and ran down to see my uncle, hoping he would talk her over, but I began to think it was no use. And, do you know, I was frantically jealous of you, old fellow! I saw she liked you and I almost believe you could have cut me out, early in the day, if you'd had the pluck to try, she was so set against me. But to-day has made it all right, and she thinks I've saved her life this time, so we're quits. Well, old man, am I not the luckiest man alive?"

"But—but—" stammered the wretched Richard, "surely, her family!"

"She's an orphan. Oh, I see what you mean; she told me she had been shocking you with an uncle who's a chemist, or a butcher, or goodness knows what. Bah! I should think the mere fact of being a hospital nurse was a patent of nobility to

any woman. But if my little girl were a beggar-maiden she would still be a real princess. God bless her!"

And Richard's groan may have been an assent.



## HELP.

BY AMELIA E. BARR.

My hands have often been weary hands,  
Too tired to do their daily task;  
And just to fold them forevermore  
Has seemed the boon that was best to ask.

My feet have often been weary feet,  
Too tired to walk another day;  
And I've thought, "To sit and calmly wait  
Is better far than the onward way."

My eyes with tears have been so dim  
That I have said, "I can not mark  
The work I do or the way I take,  
For every where it is dark—so dark!"

But, oh, thank God! There never has come  
That hour that makes the bravest quail:  
No matter how weary my feet and hands,  
God never has suffered my *heart* to fail.

So the folded hands take up their work,  
And the weary feet pursue their way;  
And all is clear when the good heart cries,  
"Be brave!—to-morrow's another day."

## THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

BY JAMES RUNCIMAN.

This Methodist local preacher was coming over the moor one fine summer night, when the moon shone so as to make the sands and trees round the village look splendid. The peacefulness of the night seemed to have impressed him, and he was occupied with his own grave thoughts.

As he passed the tavern, the front-door opened and a waft of rank tobacco came out. Then came a little mob of fishermen, many of whom were cursing and swearing. Two of them began to fight and the preacher heard the thud of heavy blows. He stepped in among the crowd and tried to separate the fighters, but he only got jeered at for his pains. He was usually very civilly treated, but the men were in drink and could not discriminate.

The next day was Sunday, and as the evening dropped down there was a stir in the village and a score or two of the villagers came out on the green. Three or four men took to playing pitch and toss, and the women got up little quarrels on their own account. A few big fellows walked to the shore and got ready the boats to go out fishing, for there was no respect shown to the Sabbath.

At 7 o'clock the preacher took his stand in the middle of the green, and remained there, bare-headed, until he had attracted attention. He began to pray aloud and the villagers stood grinning round him, until he had finished. He then asked the people to join him in a hymn, but this proposal was too comic, and the men and women laughed loudly.

The preacher was not a man however to be stopped by a little laughter. He actually did sing a hymn in a beautiful tenor; and before he had finished some of the men seemed rather ashamed of having laughed at all.

One of the leaders said, "Let us hear what this born fool has to say. If he makes very much noise we'll put him in one of the rain-water barrels." A poacher proposed that the dogs should be set on him, but though the idea was received as humorous it was not put into practice.

The preacher began a kind of rude address. He picked his words with a certain precision and managed to express himself in the dialect of the people to whom he was speaking. His enthusiasm grew and at the end of a quarter of an hour he had obtained such complete mastery over the crowd, that individuals amongst the audience unconsciously imitated the changes of his face.

The man was really a kind of poet, and

the villagers felt his power, without exactly knowing why. When the preaching was over, the orator strode away home, without speaking to anybody.

On the next Sunday he appeared in the same place, at the same hour. Only some half-dozen men and lads were on the green and these were gambling as usual, but when they saw the preacher, two or three of them ran along the Row and brought out the people. The men who had intended to go fishing, stayed out of curiosity, and not a single boat was run off the sands that night. The next week the best part of the village population was waiting when the preacher came. Some of the very old men were accommodated with logs of wood which had been brought out for seats, and the very roughest of the young men remained respectfully silent.

Some heavy clouds came over the hills and discharged a sprinkle of water upon the group. A big man stepped out and spoke to the preacher. He was one of the most powerful fellows on the coast, and had been a great ruffian in his time. It was said that he once killed a man with a single blow. He offered the preacher the use of his house, and presently all the villagers were packed in the great sanded kitchen, and a rude service was carried on under cover.

The work thus begun went on for years. Sometimes a little spasmodic emotion was shown in the meetings by the women who were hysterically inclined; but in general, the services were free from excitement and vulgarity. The little tavern had to be shut up, for the men stopped drinking.

The fishermen saw the preacher roughly dressed during the week and doing work as hard as their own, yet the influence he gained over them was so strong that it came to be regarded as a very discreditable thing for any man or woman to stay away from the evening services.

By-and-by the fisherman who had been the worst ruffian in the village used to take a turn at the preaching. His remarks would have been laughable to outsiders, but as he was a man of strong character and genuine feeling, his hearers took him quite seriously.

As the preacher grew old he was regarded with extreme reverence, especially by the women whose lives had often been very hard before the Revival.

One night the big man who had first offered the preacher shelter, was sitting in his kitchen when a neighbor came in. The new-comer seemed flurried and said, "I am going to hit you very hard. The old man is dying. He says he wants to see you, so come you away with me." The

giant didn't put his hat on, and did not even take off his sea-boots. He ran out at once and strode heavily over the moor. The old man was waiting for him, but the end was very near.

The preacher made a pathetic little joke. He said, "You once gave me shelter. Maybe I may help to get one of the many mansions ready for you." Soon after that the ebb tide began to run out and the preacher died in the big fisherman's arms.

When the day of the funeral came the men would not allow the corpse to be put in the hearse, they took turns to carry the coffin over the moor, and the women and children followed in lines.

There was a little jealousy as to who should have the old man's dog, but there was little need for that, because the collie went from house to house in the Row arranging his visits with a view to meal times.

After a while a good Episcopal clergyman took up the work the Primitive Methodist had begun. The fishers did not like the university man with his dainty accent quite as well as their rough friend, but they always behaved well to him, and they are now a very decent and sober set of people.

## LOVED TOO LATE.

BY AMELIA E. BARR.

Year after year, with a glad content,  
In and out of our home he went—

In and out.

Ever for us the skies were clear:  
*His* heart carried the care and fear,  
The care and doubt.

Our hands held with a careless hold  
All that he won of honor and gold  
In toil and pain.  
O dear hands that our burdens bore—  
Hands that shall toil for us no more,  
Never again!

Oh, it was hard to learn our loss,  
Bearing daily the heavy cross—  
The cross *he* bore:  
To say, with an aching heart and head,  
“Would to God that the Love now dead  
Were here once more!”

For when the Love we held too light  
Was gone away from our speech and sight,  
No bitter tears,  
No passionate words of fond regret,  
No yearning grief, could pay the debt  
Of thankless years.

Oh, *now* while the sweet Love lingers near,  
Grudge not the tender words of cheer:  
Leave none unsaid.  
For the heart can have no sadder fate  
Than some day to awake—too late—  
*And find Love dead!*

## LAD'S-LOVE.

BY M. E. WOTTON.

"Mr. Trevor has been a perfect God-send. The parish has never been so well ordered as these last four years."

"He will be glad to hear you find improvements. He loves his work, and I know he is popular—my boy Will."

They shook hands. The well-meaning, rather fussy visitor departed, and her hostess went back to her task of tending the window plants.

"My boy Will," she repeated, and the words were the key-note of her life.

She was a dear little old lady, of that china prettiness of blue eyes and pink-and-white cheeks which is insipid in younger women, but wholly desirable and lovely in those who are old. And she was daintily gowned, too, this glorious July morning, with some white lacey stuff over her bowed shoulders, and a pink rose-bud fastened coquettishly close to her wrinkled chin, for had not Will laid the rose on her breakfast tray, and would he not be pleased to see her wearing it when he came in presently from the schools? She was humming a little—hymns perforce—for, except at the annual concert, there was not much choice of music in this hill-encradled village; and she handled her plants as if she loved them.

The shock-headed youth who, together with the energetic young vicar himself, managed to keep their half-acre of garden one of the shows of the neighborhood, used to rouse the ready laugh with which familiar witticisms were greeted when he told the fate of various pet ferns and flowers. For their gentle mistress mothered them more unflaggingly than do most women their children, and many a chilly evening had "Garge" carried pot after pot into the brick-floored kitchen, knowing that "her leddyship" was going without her own bedroom fire that the kitchen one might be banked the higher. Small economies were a matter of necessity to their frugal housekeeping, and they had no glass.

But if the fourteen-year-old gardener, imbued with a fine disdain for all that did not advance material comfort, sought to repeat his choicest anecdote anent a certain bush of southernwood, then the interest of his audience suddenly waned. For they knew she cared for it under its homelier name of lad's-love, and that the vicar had given it her, and so, as they said, "'T were nat'ral."

Thus the kindly village gossips; but, had they known it there was ampler reason than any they could ascribe that the little lady

should treasure especially any gift of the man around whom her world revolved. For her lines had not fallen always in these pleasant places, and the unusually close union between mother and son was the outcome of much past misery. The loveliest blossoms are often the growth of sharpest pruning, and the network of wrinkles innumerable around her eyes and mouth were not wholly due to Time's carving.

She had been only a schoolroom child of sixteen when Sir Jasper Trevor had first seen her, and partly, perhaps, through her girlish timidity and shy glances, and partly through his strong preconceived notions that the only fitting mate for his autocracy was one of his own moulding, he had found in her what pleased him. He was rich, her father poor, and both were men of strong wills, so a very few months saw "Miss Amy" transformed into "her ladyship," still very childlike, innocent, and bewildered, but with the memory of her confirmation vows strong upon her, and valiantly determined both to do her duty and to make her new home the abode of love.

Sir Jasper's intentions were undoubtedly the more successful of the two. He hated sentiment, and designated everything which even dimly approached it as "foolery." He conscientiously gave his wife

what he considered her due: she wore sombre silks and much jewelry, which looked grotesque and out of place on her slim, small figure, and her horses were the best matched in the county. But that she should dare to evince an interest in his concerns, even to the extent of a few frightened questions about his factory girls, was an unheard-of piece of presumption: and that actual endearments should ever pass between them was a thing undreamed of in his narrow philosophy.

Children came—Jasper, Ada, Charlotte, family names in which she was not consulted. They grew up thorough Trevors, as their father boasted proudly, and inherited none of the many “fooleries” for which he openly despised his wife. And then came an eventful two years during which both girls married without any reference to the mother who would fain have lived in their young lives some of the romance her own had lacked; their brother became a partner; and Sir Jasper himself suddenly died. How far this last event might have affected his widow, and to what voluntary torture of remorse she would have subjected herself for the involuntary and inevitable feeling of relief, must remain unsolved problems, for the day that saw the death of the great cotton lord saw also the birth of his youngest child, and after an

eighteen years' silence, the nursery walls were once more echoing to an infant's cry.

He was called William, which was another family name, and in accordance with his dead father's decree, but in her heart his mother thought of him as Barnabas, "the son of her consolation," and when he and she left the great gloomy house and went away to make a new home amongst strangers, for the first time she felt herself a rich and happy woman. For the boy was her own—a thing to love and live for, to caress with tender words and phrases which came oddly at first from her unaccustomed lips; an innocent white soul to dedicate to God in the present, and to His especial ministry in time to come. This thought kept her from spoiling him, and as the years sped on a new beauty crept into her life. For this fair-haired boy of hers grew up sweet-natured and chivalrous, and gradually she came to lean upon him, and to have him in a thousand ways devoted to her service. Their positions were reversed. She had never yet been considered by anybody, nor been other than cramped in her dull grey-toned existence, and thus it was in the person of her own son that she found the first and one lover of her life.

Her only dread in those days was that she should not be sufficiently grateful to

the God who had so amply blessed her, and it cost Will much endeavor to convince her that that very dread proved her gratitude.

"And are you sure? Quite sure?" asked the little lady appealingly, resting her fragile weight against his stalwart six feet of manhood, and with her gentle soul shining in her uplifted eyes.

"Quite, dear," said Will. He stooped to kiss her. "He loves you more than you do me, and you would grieve, wouldn't you, if you found I doubted my own belief in your love."

This convinced her, and when she had made a practice of following his advice, and always doing something for one of His little ones when her sense of thanksgiving was feeling painfully inadequate, this one tiny cloud upon her horizon disappeared. From that time onward to this July morning when she was watering her plants, her simple life had been one of profound content.

"Mo-ther!"

Lady Trevor did not answer, for the mere pleasure of hearing the well-loved voice call to her again. Women will do such foolish things, and it was a matter of surprise to the inquisitive George that his mistress never appeared to hear the first time.

"Mo-ther!"

"Yes, my boy."

The door swung open and in came the vicar, a man not handsome in other than partial eyes, but with a something in his face to which people were instantly attracted. In manner he had the wonderful charm which is possessed by all exceedingly busy men who nevertheless have leisure for other folks' concerns.

"Mother, I met young Heath out by Leggatt's farm, and he wants to begin the coaching again. Do you think it would worry you if I took him here in the evenings? They can't afford a tutor."

"I should like it, Will. It would save you the walk."

"And Mrs. Wyatt has twins. Don't you think we might manage to help them a bit. Poor little beggars! Nobody welcomes them, and Wyatt looked very crestfallen as he told me."

"We might try," she began dubiously, and then changed it to a hurried "Oh, yes, we must somehow. I will see to it, Will."

"Thank you, dear. Has White been here—no? Have the papers come?"

He had kissed her on entering, as he always did after a brief absence, and now he slid his arm through hers, and the two went wandering round the pretty garden. Will called it his refreshment time, and it

was a regular part of his daily program that he should then pick her a scrap of lad's-love, which she kept faithfully until he replaced it on the morrow. On Sunday she placed the sprig in her Bible, and by preference in Hebrews, in the belief that her boy's love-token would render the text less obscure to her simple understanding. She never told this to Will, dreading it might be heterodox, but nevertheless it solaced her.

He was out that afternoon, summoned by a sick man to a distance, and the little lady, feeling the house oppressively hot, had betaken herself and her knitting to a shady nook in the garden, when her attention was suddenly arrested by voices on the other side of the laurel hedge. The lane ran there, and two people had evidently met on that very spot. She recognized their voices almost immediately—one was Will's, the other belonged to an old playfellow of his, a girl to whom Lady Trevor was warmly attached, Cynthia Wren.

"....and, you see, I wanted to consult you," said Cynthia.

The unseen listener looked suspiciously at her knitting. It lay on the grass at her feet, and was witness to the fact she had fallen asleep, and had only waked in the middle of their conversation. It did not

occur to her to announce her presence. They had always been excellent friends, these two, and, of course, they talked unrestrainedly before her.

"I am not quite the person to be consulted," Will answered after a pause, speaking with a new awkwardness that sat oddly upon him. "What does Mrs. Wren think of it?"

Her reply, and then his query, another reply, and then another of those unfamiliar pauses, made the gist of what they had previously said clear to her. Cynthia apparently had had an offer to go abroad for a couple of years to complete her musical education, and as there were many of them in her home, and no especial duties to keep her amongst them, the decision had been left wholly in her own hands.

That decision she now placed in Will's.

"You asked me to let you know if any important choice in my life were offered me."

There was a proud hurt ring in the clear young voice, and a slight movement as if she had withdrawn from him a pace.

"In Oxford days; I recollect," Will assented, "but I was young and hot-headed then, I suppose. I selfishly took it for granted that I should have more to do with the moulding of my own life than I had any real reason to expect, and consequently

I thought I should have more to do with the moulding of—other people's."

He was speaking very slowly, almost, as it seemed, with difficulty, and his listener on the farther side of the laurel hedge sat as if carved in stone. Was this her boy whose every thought (it had been her one boast) she had believed herself to have shared?

"When you, or anyone," Will said presently, still in that curiously deliberate fashion, "are good enough to ask of me any decision, I have to decide it purely on its own merits. I must not think about how it would affect me personally. My mother——"

A strong nature, be it man's or woman's, never allows the voice to falter over hard words. Will stopped abruptly, and waited a full minute before ending his sentence.

"My mother must be my first thought so long as God spares her to me."

Perhaps at that moment their eyes met. There may have been an appeal in hers.

"She has had a hard life of it, you know," Will said huskily, "and I am all she has. She must always be first with me."

What more was there to hear? Very little. A courageous attempt on Cynthia's part to change what sounded like a sob into a laugh; a laboriously turned jest about the dangers of asking divers opinions—his and many, oh! very many, others—about this

projected foreign trip when she was fully determined from the outset that she would go; and then an endeavor on both sides to speak on another topic.

Did they part abruptly, risk the good-bye from which the old friendliness had flown, and into which the new love dared not enter?

Lady Trevor never knew. After one or two abortive attempts she managed to rise stiffly to her feet, and very slowly she crept back to the house, and up the broad shallow stairs to her own room. Once there, she locked the door, and fell upon her bed, her eyes tearless, her face drawn. The tragedy of her life had come.

At first she was conscious of nothing but pain. Her boy Will was hers no longer, and she had not known it. Therein lay the sting. Not that he had wider hopes and longings for a fuller life, but that, having them, she, his mother, had been deceived by the quiet courage with which he had crushed them down. She could not remember that his voice had ever taken a note less joyous, nor his manner been pre-occupied or unusual. True, he had looked graver than his wont at times, but that she had put down to parish difficulties; and when a stray listener, and one whose opinions bore weight, told her he had been struck by the self-abnegatory tone of her

son's sermons, which was really remarkable for so young a man, she had smiled well pleased, and had quoted a verse of George Herbert. She understood it now.

A maid came tapping at the door to ask if her tea should be brought her up-stairs.

"I don't want any; I am tired. Leave me alone until nine o'clock. I will come down then."

She did not add any inquiry as to "the master," for she felt sure that he would not be at home for the tea-drinking that day. It was her blood which pulsed in his veins, and she knew well that after that meeting with Cynthia he would go tramping for miles, hurriedly and fiercely, to get away from himself, to expel the demon of desire by sheer physical exhaustion, as she herself would have done if she had not been so old.

So old! She shivered a little, as the twilight crept on.

Surely the most beautiful task that can be undertaken is so to behave that the one who loves us, if he or she be much older than are we, never guesses at the advance of old age. For the younger limbs to confess to fatigue five minutes before the elder have discovered they are failing; for the younger eyes never to perceive a distant object until approach has made it clear to the dimmer vision; for the younger ears to

feign non-hearing that an imperfectly grasped sentence may be repeated. This is the office of love, and very thoroughly had Will rendered it.

"Seventy," murmured the little old lady, feebly, "seventy this year," and she began fumbling in the neck of her dress for the sprig of lad's-love which always lay hidden there.

It had slipped, or else the trembling fingers could not find it, and the loss of it brought home to her still more acutely the greater loss and its bitterness.

The tears started to her eyes. The old weep with difficulty, and not many drops over-brimmed and coursed slowly down the withered cheeks, and even these the growing twilight hid from the pictured Will that hung upon the wall. But few as they were, the tears eased her pain, and pushing resolutely from her the inclination to dwell upon the thought of Will as a white-robed child in her arms—in any or every phase, in short, but that of his present manhood, she began planning how she might aid her boy.

For he and Cynthia must have their way; on that point she was quite decided. Cynthia was a good girl—not good enough for Will, of course, but still a very good girl as girls went nowadays—and she would make him an excellent wife. She herself

would not live with them. She had a horror of amalgamated households, and a lively recollection of how Sir Jasper's mother had lived with her son and his wife, to the misery of all three. But, on the other hand, her boy would never let her go away; she must sketch it all out without ever letting him guess what the laurel hedge had screened that day.

Lying there in the silent, shadowy room, with her poor heart beating somewhat unevenly under this new stress which had been laid upon it, it was a great shock to her to realize that, as lack of love had cramped two-thirds of her own life, so by over-love she had been cramping her son's.

"She must always be first with me," Will had said. Dear Will! She was sorry she could never thank him for that.

The tired thoughts were wandering from the goal she wanted to reach when suddenly a method flashed before her in its entirety. An old friend of hers, a Miss Fenton, lived in London, and had often begged her to be her guest. She would accept, and go at once, and then delay her return indefinitely, saying she thought it wiser to remain under the doctor's care for a bit. "It will be quite true; I don't feel well now, and I shall feel worse then," she told herself almost cheerfully. Then, later on, she would write to

him that probably, if there were any chance of seeing him married, she would remain where she was. She had made her niche, and he must forgive her if she began fancying she was rather old for adequate parish work; whereas a wife——

Lady Trevor had faced too much in her life not to feel assured of her ability to face this, the last and greatest of her trials.

She turned from the thought of it with a sigh wearier than any she had yet drawn, and began to wonder what time it was, and what Will would talk about at supper.

A boyish phrase recurred to her.

"I hope I shall always be plucky, mother," he had said. "I should hate to be a coward."

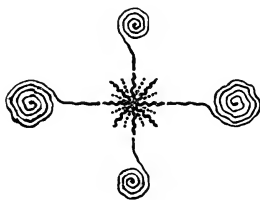
He had had his wish, bless him! and now she was going to be "plucky," too.

She sat up on the bed, and, raising her hands, peered at them through the darkness. They did not seem to be trembling, and her heart was quieter now. She wondered if she could laugh during supper, and tried now to judge, but the effect was rather ghastly in that hushed room, and she stopped abruptly.

Her hand was on the door, when a sudden thought struck her. She had never lived in London in all her life, and looked on it as a place which was wholly given up to grime and fogs. Would her bush of

lad's-love bear transplanting, and could she have it there in a pot? For if it died——! But, at all events, she could try.

She opened the door, and went slowly but firmly down the stairs.



## AN AFFAIR OF THE HEART.

BY AMELIA E. BARR.

## I.

“Men weary of the tale of Troy, but never of the tale of Love.” So I pass by Col. Dent, leaning on his sword and talking of his tremendous pilgrimage through battlefields, to tell the story of his daughter Katherine’s love affair. When it began they were living at Boroughbridge, in a house exceeding old, even in that ancient town. It was part of an Augustine abbey; and the garden had yet a monkish air of sweet and lonely retirement. In the twilight it was an eerie place, full of moth-like wings, and the low twitter of sleepy birds.

But Katherine loved the lonely spot, and one sweet June night she lingered there longer than usual. Its old-world memories impregnated her like a perfume, and she was full of vague sympathies, when she passed into the house. A hat and a pair of riding gloves lay on the hall table, but she had no doubt they belonged to Dr. Lowe—the physician who visited her father every night—and there was not the slightest premonition in her heart, as she passed from the dim stairway, into the lighted parlor. Yet when she entered it,

a man stood there, who was to influence all her after life.

"My daughter Katherine, Dr. Kensall," said the colonel, proudly; and Katherine and Dr. Kensall bowed and glanced at each other. That glance was the first sympathetic movement of soul to soul. What he saw was a woman tall and slender, with a beautiful countenance, dreamy eyes, a smiling mouth, and air like some old-fashioned portrait. What she saw was a fair-faced Saxon, with a sensitive blush, large gray eyes, and a curious attitude of resignation, as if he felt life to be a sad business, and the less said about it the better.

After he had gone away the colonel explained the visit. "Dr. Lowe," he said, "has very wisely secured a young assistant. I like him. He is clever. He understands my case. I wish Lowe would send him here always," and the colonel so cleverly translated this wish into actuality, that Dr. Kensall's visits soon became a matter of course.

How does Love grow? Who can tell? At first it was only through the most ordinary courtesies it made a way for itself between the doctor and Katherine; then, one day, there was a meeting of their hands; and the next day, a meeting of their eyes. And can anyone describe what may sometimes be seen in the eyes of a maiden,

or the delicious sensation of the man who looks into them to find it there? At first Katherine resolved to think no more of the young doctor, and still she continued thinking; and every day she was more in love with him. The serenity of virginal indifference warmed into a sweet womanly interest; and then, one evening—they knew not how—they met in each others' arms. Not a word was said, and yet everything was confessed and understood; while in a kiss full of mutual rapture each felt all that can only be felt once in a life-time.

Words came later, though there was no need of them. Love is known in a moment. If a man had never seen the sun, he would know the sunshine when he did see it; nor would he be long in finding words to express his joy and admiration. It was thus with Robert Kensall. Love made him eloquent; he found glowing words to tell his love, and to plead for love in return. For a few weeks they were divinely happy; they took no thought for the future, and the joy of the present was all sufficing.

But happiness is surrounded by thorns, touch it on what side you will. The colonel began to wonder, and then to suspect. Katherine grew more and more lovely and happy; he grew more and more silent and somber. He would ask no questions, for he feared the answers to them; neither

would he watch his daughter, his nature was too honorable and soldierly for that. And yet the fear and suspense made him sick, body and soul. He told himself that only Love could have made Katherine's beauty so radiant, and her heart so joyful; and into their secluded life no one but Dr. Kensall had come often enough, and familiarly enough, to win a girl so maidenly and so sensible.

This idea having entered his mind, everything confirmed it. Then he began to hate the young man. He was really jealous of him, and jealousy is much the same passion, whether it dwell in the heart of a parent or a lover. His daughter was the apple of his heart; he could not bear to think of life without her. On his return from India, ten years previously, he had taken her from school, and ever since there had been but one thought between them. That a nobody like Dr. Kensall should try to slip into the exclusive Druidical circle of his family enraged him, and he was at length hotly impatient to speak his mind about it. He watched the clock for his arrival, but the doctor came not at the usual hour. Then he went to the window and as he stood there he heard a sound of singing in the garden, and saw Katherine and her lover coming hand in hand between the bare shrubbery, a love song

warbling in their throats. The sight made him very wroth, and every moment's delay increased his anger; so that when Dr. Kensall entered, with the complacent joy of a favored lover on his face, the colonel reached a point beyond all care for offense.

"Dr. Kensall," he said, "understand, that I desire your service no longer—that I do not wish to see you again. Good night, sir!"

His words were javelins in the doctor's heart. There was no answer possible. He bowed, and closed the door behind him with a singular softness. It was as if he had shut it upon some loved thing, dead. And this noiseless exit, though without intention, annoyed the old soldier. He had expected some show of fight, and he felt a sense of defeat. And while he stood pondering the situation, Katherine came swiftly into the room.

"What have you said?" she cried. "What have you done? Oh, father! how could you treat a friend so rudely? What fault has Robert committed?"

"'Robert!' what fault has he not committed, when you thus make yourself familiar with his name? He has come into my house, like a thief in the night, to steal from me my most precious treasure."

"It has not been stolen from you. I gave it."

"Be maidenly. At the proper time, I would have brought here for you a proper husband."

"And would you have thought it just and kind, to make me accept a husband I did not wish to accept?"

"Do you think it just and kind, to force me to accept a son-in-law I do not wish to accept? The cases are identical."

"I love Robert Kensall."

"I hate him! and I have as much right to hate as you have to love. Choose then between Robert Kensall and your father. I am seventy years old. I have no one but you, to comfort my last days, and close my eyes in death. But if you prefer this strange man, I shall not oppose your going to him, whenever you wish; in such case, the sooner the better. I do not care to sit day after day watching my enemy's triumph, and looking at my own sorrow. Let me meet it at once, and be done with it."

"I have no wish to leave you, father—Robert has yet no home for me."

"I understand—"

"No, no; you do not! What shall I say? My dear, dear father—I will never leave you!"

"Let it be so then. I will resign my plan of marrying you to my cousin's son, who is also my natural heir; and you must

resign your desire to marry Dr. Kensall. It is a mutual, and necessary, concession. And the young man must go away. I shall see to that."

She answered only with a rain of tears. And the colonel saw "to that" at once. With the celerity and inexorable decision which had marked his military plans, he attended to the matter. There were two interviews between the colonel and the doctor, and one interview between Katherine and her lover. The latter took place—not with the colonel's sanction, but at least with his permission—in the lonely desolated walk which skirted the garden. Robert was very wretched, and very quiet. He was worn out with feeling, and Katherine's tears rained upon a heart turned into stone by suffering. For there was to be no comfort of letter writing. When Dr. Kensall had decided, where, in the wide world, he would locate himself, he was to notify the colonel. "One word, the name of the place, will be sufficient," was the form of the curt permission; and the only other concession granted to love was a promise to allow the subject to be reopened, at the end of three years.

From these sorrowful texts, what vows and plans were made in that last miserable walk! It was a warm, misty night in November. The leaves were gone, and the

singing birds, and of all the flowers of June none were left but a few Michaelmas daises. Without analyzing their surroundings, they felt the fitness of them; and there was even a touch of sarcasm in Robert's grief, as he recalled the sunshine and music of their betrothal. "It has turned out with my love, as with all else in my sad life," he said, with a bitter laugh. "Nothing comes to perfection; and this garden has been, to me, a very Vale of Maenalus: where

"I pursued a maiden, and clasped a reed:  
Gods and men are all deluded thus;  
It breaks in our bosom, and then we bleed."

Nor did Katherine's tears, and protestations, and pleas for duty, satisfy him; he could not help but feel that, in some sort, he had been deserted. This slight feeling of dissatisfaction was evident to the colonel, and he relied upon it. In three years he believed it would work the whole edifice of love to ruin. It certainly affected the parting of the lovers, and shadowed hope, though Katherine's last kisses were given with passionate assurances of devotion and loyalty.

Then she tried to make her life fall back into its old placid groove. She did not wish this irreparable loss which had ruined

her own happiness to make others wretched. All the day long, she showed a bright face to her little world; it was the night, which celebrated the resurrection of her love. In the day, that remarkable thing called Respectability forced her to hide whatever feeling was not conventional; but at night, her lovely, tender soul indulged an obstinate longing for that divine something lost out of her life. Yet she did not despair, though not even the "one word" permitted broke the silence which had fallen between her lover and herself. "The things of the heart are eternal," she thought; "and to-morrow, perhaps to-morrow! One never knows, what God has reserved for the morrow!" Thus faithfully musing, she would fall into forgetfulness; and, at last, sleep come to comfort her.

To fear, to wait, to doubt, to begin hoping anew, to say "it is impossible," to have but one thought, and to turn that thought a thousand ways, to feel disappointment cankering life, and to smile above all her suffering; this was now the story of Katherine's life. The "one word" came not from Robert. She blamed, and then excused him. He was perhaps sick. He was proud, and had good reason to be offended. She did not wonder he disliked to write even that "one word" to her father. But doubtless, he had a great surprise in store

for her. And thus Love trusted and hoped, and if it grieved it also forgave.

When the three years were nearly over the colonel was near unto death. But he was quite ready to follow, when beckoned; and, during these last days, he looked keenly and steadily into the darkness he was about to penetrate. "I am going to quit my life, dear Katherine," he said. "I am not ordered out of it. I quit it. I give up my spirit to Him who desires me; or I should not be willing to go to Him. You have been a faithful and loving child, through much sorrow and anxiety. Take what reward God will give you. All I have is yours. I have put on it no restriction but your own honor."

"Dear father, tell me now, if you ever heard from Robert Kensall?"

"Have you doubted me? My darling daughter, I have never had a single word from him. I should have told you—if I had." With this assertion, a solemn pallor spread over his face; his long earthly march was over; and he—

"—stepped out grandly to the Infinite."

## II.

After her father's death, the world seemed empty to Katherine. There had been a dim belief in her heart that the col-

onel knew the whereabouts of her lover, and that after the three years' probation had been fulfilled, he would tell her. His solemn assurance of ignorance left her without hope. And yet, as the end of the appointed time drew near, she began to expect Robert's return. All her soul was ever at the window, and her ears ached for the footsteps on the flagged walk, that she knew so well. Every morning she rose with a fresh expectation; every night she went to her room despairing. At length the three years had quite gone by; there was no response to her heart's eager hope, and, heavy with sorrowful disappointment, she gave up her dream. A dreary winter followed; but during its conventional seclusion she fought, through the mystery of suffering, to that peace which is the consecration of life.

So with the spring there was a return of hope, and she resolved to seek him, who for some reason did not return to her. Perhaps he was too poor to come, and too proud to say so. Perhaps he had been told she was unfaithful. Often she had read, and heard, of love slain by such slander. Travel would be good for her, and if by travel she could find the soul she loved the circumference of the world would be but a little way. An eagerness that put rest out of the question, possessed her. Far and

wide she wandered; east to the great Indian cities; west, to the Golden Gate, but she found no trace of Robert Kensall. He had disappeared as completely as a stone dropped into mid-ocean. No one she met had ever heard his name; and she came to the conclusion that he had changed it. With this conviction she lost hope, and returned to her home, saying to her heart: "Our meeting, if it is ever to take place, is now in the hands of Destiny—and Destiny is Providence—and Providence loves surprises—what we call accidents are usually God's part in an event—I will search no more; everything comes to those who can wait—I can wait."

It was a blessed thing for Katherine, that she was one of those women who can take advantage of their disadvantages. After her return home, she built out of the ruin of her own love the home of many other loves. It was in this way—something to care for, to work for, was what she wanted; but the ordinary charities with which she was associated did not satisfy her sympathies. It was to the woman forsaken or wounded by love that her heart went out. Isolated women, who had never had a lover. Poor women, wearily waiting until their lovers could make a home. Weak and wounded women, who had thought love to be a staff, and found him

a barbed lance. Women, deserted and ill-used. Widows, forlorn and weeping; all women, indeed, sorrowful and desolate, whose hearts had been shipwrecked by their affections, soon learned that, in Katherine Dent's sympathy, there was not only comfort, but help.

It was a loving kindness that needed no advertising; one sad woman told another. It was also one that provided Katherine with never ceasing and constantly varying employment. She, alone was her clients' confidante; and she alone attended to their necessities. These were as variable as her clients. Sometimes pitiful letters took her on long journeys of help or investigation; and her household grew accustomed to her going away at any moment, and ceased to wonder at the strange, unhappy creatures who found their way into Miss Katherine's secret kindness. Also, out of this labor of love there grew up an immense correspondence, which she only could attend to—familiar letters, referring to past troubles, or prospective happiness. In a year her days were so full that she had no time for regrets. And it was all for the sake of Robert Kensall! To the memory of their tender, unhappy affection, she gave her life freely, in a sweet savor of sacrificial remembrance.

One day, six years after her parting with

her lover, she received a letter from a girl in Scotland, who was in a sore necessity. It came in the hot days of July, when the thought of the great North sea and its salt sharp breezes was a delight. Katherine answered the letter in person, and the answer took her to a little village on the coast of Fife. On the night of her arrival she was sitting in the gloaming on the top of a cliff overhanging the ocean. The highway was a little behind her. She heard the clatter of a galloping horse, and turned her head to look at the rider. It was Robert Kensall. She was sure of it, though he rode swiftly and the gray light made all outlines indistinct. She leaped to her feet, calling: "Robert! Robert! Robert!" But the wind blew the words backwards, and he heard them not. There was a little lad playing not far away, and she went to him, and asked if he knew "the gentleman who had just passed."

"I do," was the answer. "It would be the doctor himsel'."

"Dr. Kensall?"

"Ay, just him."

"Where does he live?"

"In the big town near by us—Anstruther."

"Has he lived there a long time?"

"I'm thinking sae. I ken him à' my life."

"Thank you;" and she dropped a silver coin into the laddie's hand.

Late as it was, she went to Anstruther, wrote a letter, and sent it by a messenger to Dr. Kensall. The boy on his return said: "The doctor would be from home until after midnight." She was too happy to be disappointed. "In the morning!" she said. "In the morning I shall see him again!" She lay awake until the dawning. She was sure that Robert was also awake; and she resolved to be dressed very early, so as not to keep him waiting a moment. At eight o'clock she had taken her breakfast; at nine he had not arrived. But soon after nine there was a tap at the door, and she rose and went toward it, saying eagerly, as she did so: "Come in! Come in!" A woman entered—a woman with a pale face and large sunken black eyes. Her clothing was home-made and ill-fitting; her manner embarrassed and yet half-resentful. The impression she made was not pleasant, and Katherine was disappointed at the intrusion, so that her manner had not its usual gracious kindness. The stranger looked at her with curious envy, and then produced the letter she had written to Dr. Kensall.

"I have brought it back," she said. "He was out last night, and I opened it. I always open his letters. I am his wife."

"His wife!"

She had thought of him as sick, as poor, even as angry, but never once had his probable marriage entered her consciousness. "His wife!" The words fell on her heart like an actual blow. She sat down, saying in a half-conscious way: "His wife!"

"Well, I have told you so. He married me out of pity, five years ago. I did not think so then, but I have found it out since."

"You are Robert Kensall's wife?"

"I am Robert Kensall's wife. Now, will you go away? Don't let him know that you have been here. It can do you no good. It will make him very miserable. And I should suffer also. I know all about you. I have read it in his diary."

"How could you be so dishonorable? How could you?"

"Will you go away? If Robert should see you, and then look at me, what chance have I? Oh, can't you understand?"

"I can."

"And you will go?"

"I will go at once."

The poor soul looked at her handsome rival with wonder, and a little shame. "I am often very ill," she said, softly. "I am ill now;" and she turned away and went toward the door. Katherine followed her, and on the threshold said:

"Let me kiss you once for his sake! We have both loved him!" and she took the

woman's hands and kissed her, and then stood watching, until she was out of sight.

For awhile she sat still with her sorrow, and tried to face it. To weep now for Robert was a sin; he was the husband of another woman. The years of her ignorance must suffice for her love and her longing, and her first monition was to ask forgiveness for the wrong, done without intention. Henceforward, utter renouncement was her first duty, and not a moment of the future must be sullied by regret. The advice she had given to others, she must take into her own heart, and learn by experience another lesson in love's sorrowful book.

So she returned to her home and her work, taking it up in a more healthy and cheerful spirit; and the months and the years went by, and she was not unhappy. All humanity touched her heart; and she traveled to the bounds of the earth, and the seas and the everlasting hills. Only that one little town on the Fife coast was blotted from her map of the world. Thither she would not suffer even a thought to stray. Every woman, at some time of her life, is Eve. The tempting apple is there for her to take, or reject. Katherine would not discuss her right to it; she simply declined to know its existence, and in so doing she was wise beyond words, for the first

step toward any wrong is to consider whether it might be possible to do it.

It was on the night of her thirtieth birthday, that her life turned back to find its age of gold; a lovely night in August, when the trellis in the old garden was all abloom with white and red roses. The full moon cast over them her wondrous glamour; and the nightingale in the boskages of the green palaces above was singing at intervals his song of passionate love. This night, in spite of all her efforts, the thought of Robert Kensall would flash itself into the peace and beauty around, and she suddenly became afraid of the sweet temptation, and turned toward the lighted house. Then, at that moment, Robert Kensall stood before her. He took her hands, and looked into her face, and said only:

“Katherine! My sweet Katherine!”

Then all the debt of happiness the past ten years owed them was fully paid. Robert was now free to tell his love, and plead his cause, and oh, how easy it was for Katherine to excuse; and where excuse was hard to find, then to forgive. And what sweetness it was to pardon! What joy to stay with kisses the confession of pride, and poverty, and weakness, which Robert had to make. He told her everything, and she loved and trusted and freely forgave him everything. Had he not also suffered?

And she kept the suffering before her consciousness, and refused to see that his own want of faith and patience had been the cause of it all.

For three wonderful hours they wandered, or sat, in the old garden; telling little stories of their love and sorrow, or planning, to the bird's song above them, the joys of the future. And when Robert at last said a reluctant "good night, sweet Katherine! Good night, my dear one!" she ran lightly and happily upstairs to the music of her heart; and, looking in the mirror, was astonished at her beauty, and glad of it.

"Oh, how good is the end of sorrow!" she mused, as she uncoiled her bright brown hair. "God has given me a thousand-fold for all my tears and fears. It is not the uncertain bloom, but the ripe fruitage of love, I gather. Robert loves me! And, oh, how dearly I love him!" and she shut her eyes, and let her hands downfall, and as she slowly rocked herself, hummed in low, sweet melody:

"My heart is like a singing bird,  
Whose nest is in a watered shoot;  
My heart is like an apple tree,  
Whose boughs are bent with rosy fruit.  
My heart is like a rainbow shell,  
That paddles in a halcyon sea;  
Because the Birthday of my Life,  
Is come; my Love is come to me!"

EVERY CROSS BEARS ITS OWN  
INSCRIPTION.

BY AMELIA E. BARR.

A long, very long room, lit from the roof. Thousands of threads around thousands of spindles. Hundreds of mules and throstles and looms working as if they were endowed with intelligence. Nearly four hundred women watching the operation: a few have a little knitting or a book in their hand, but this is no child's play, and there is no room for laughing or folly where a moment's carelessness might be the gravest wrong, or a few thoughtless steps a frightful death. You may see such rooms in nearly every street in Manchester. Stand with me a moment at the door and look in; and if an inspiration of prayer, a longing to sing "Glory to God on High," does not fill your heart, it is dry as summer's dust. For in our days there are giants in the earth again; giants with cranks and wheels and iron arms tethered to do work instead of men, and frail, pale-faced women control them—nay! a little child can lead them. The smoke wreaths from the tall chimneys of these temples of labor are better far than all the clouds of the ancient sacrifices; the hum of the engine, the breath of its

iron lungs, the clank and clash of machinery, is nobler music than the barbaric cymbal, or pealing trumpet; for when these latter fill the air with their dissonant rejoicing "blood is on the grass like dew," but those solemn, earnest toilers in iron hum the symphony of the Millennium.

Such a scene and such thoughts filled my eyes and heart one summer morning in the city of Manchester, nearly twenty years ago. But as one object in a landscape, or one figure in a picture, will by some inexplicable sympathy force itself on your notice, so also among four hundred women I almost instantly selected one as every way above her fellows. Perhaps I was involuntarily directed to her by an uneasy glance from my companion, but having once noticed her it was impossible to turn my eyes from her. She had the charge of two looms, and she stood between them calmly watching their movements. The moment a hread broke, her quick eye detected it, and her fingers deftly repaired the damage. The Lancashire girls are justly famed for their beauty, but this one had personal loveliness of the highest order. Her brow was large and calm, her face like a holy book, only the large grey eyes had a pensive waiting gaze in them that gave me the idea of a hungry heart. But as we passed her, her whole coun-

tenance changed, the blood surged over her face, and she turned to my companion with a look inquisitive, almost imploring—he gave her neither word nor look, and in a moment she became white as marble again.

My interest was strangely excited, and as soon as we were out of the factory I said, "Who was that girl who looked so strangely at you, Mr. Braithwaite?"

"Her name is Jane Wilson," he answered gruffly.

"She seemed to know you."

"She does know me." And then he shut himself up in a coat of bristling silence, which said at every point, "Hands off." He was driving furiously too, and looked so black and angry that I involuntarily endorsed Carlyle's opinion—"Every man contains within him a madman."

John Braithwaite, twenty-seven years before this, had married my mother's favorite maid. He was then a poor handloom weaver, but his mind was cast in a large type and he was among the first to recognize the new omnipotence of the steam engine and to ally himself with it. So at this day he stood foremost among the cotton-cratie lords of his adopted city. Though of humble birth, he had been polished and whetted by daily attrition with steam and commerce, until he had at-

tained a very good control of his naturally violent passions. Those who did not see into the "bluebeard chamber" of his life—his home—believed him to be the most genial and generous of men. But the true test of goodness is to be good at home, among the women and children and servants dependent on one's love and forbearance. And John Braithwaite could not have stood this test. His wife's perfect love had not cast out her fear of him. His two daughters had been compelled to marry as he desired. His servants obeyed him trembling. His "hands" served him with an enforced faithfulness, grudgingly and without interest. None of these things however troubled him; nay, he rather enjoyed them as evidences of his power and superiority. But punishment, though slow to come, comes surely; and the Nemesis had been growing up at his fireside, fostered in his bosom, trained in all his ways for twenty-five years. He had never guessed it. He knew certainly that his only son Antony was willful and stubborn, and impatient of all control; but it was his son, and he tolerated, nay even admired these traits of character so strongly resembling his own.

"Antony is a chip of the old block," was his apology for every act of insubordination either at school or at home. That

Antony would dare eventually to disobey him, had not entered into his belief of possibilities. The fact had been presented to him without softening or palliation at his own dinner-table, one night, about a year before the time at which my story opens—in this manner:

“Antony,” said his father, “I think you are old enough to marry. I was speaking to-day to Sam Wakefield about his daughter. She’ll have £50,000.”

“That is nothing to me, sir. You don’t expect that I will sell myself for £50,000.” And he stretched out his young handsome figure and lifted his face proudly to meet the look with which his father watched him,—a look half persuasive and half admiring.

“All right, my lad. The world won’t rate you a penny higher than you rate yourself, and £50,000 is not much for the honor of being Mrs. Antony Braithwaite; but old Wakefield has influence enough with mine to return you to Parliament, next election.”

“I don’t want to go to Parliament, sir. Not on any account, and I have already chosen my wife.”

“Would it be a liberty if I inquired whom you intend giving me as a daughter?” demanded the old man, in an angry, mocking voice.

"Not at all, sir," answered Antony, sipping his wine with provoking coolness. "Her name is Jane Wilson, she works in the Duke-street mill; you may remember she saved my life three years ago, when I first went among them confounding wheels and bands."

The altercation was fierce but short, neither party would yield an inch, and in an hour Antony Braithwaite had left his father's house, he said for ever. Greatly to the old man's amazement, Jane remained steadily at her work, her pale face and weary look alone testifying to her anxiety. One day, coming suddenly on her, he found her weeping; and a feeling partly pity and partly curiosity made him stop and say, "Come into the office after hours, Jane, I want to speak to you."

Even in her linsey petticoat and calico sacque, he could not help acknowledging to himself the girl's splendid beauty. And it was a weak point with him,—he could have forgiven so lovely a woman almost anything but just the one thing of which Jane had been guilty. Still the pathetic look in her large grey eyes, and the trembling round her perfect mouth, half disarmed his anger. He never thought of "introducing" the subject, but with his usual straightforward bluntness said, "Jane, where is Antony, and when did you hear from him?"

"I have never seen nor heard from him since the night he left his home, sir."

"What do you think of yourself, lass, to make so much trouble between me and my son?"

"I would think bad enough of myself, sir, if I had made the trouble. I couldn't help Antony loving me, and I tried hard enough to help loving him. I wouldn't marry him no gate unless you asked me yourself to do it, and he's just as angry at me as you are. He said he was going over the sea, and indeed I'm a foolish lass to ware two thoughts on him. There's lads enou' would be fain to marry me."

"Ay! ay! Jane! But it's the money, not the lad."

"It is the lad with me, sir. And he's a handsome lad, and none that bad either; if he's got a high temper and a proud heart, you know he came honest by them. And if he loved a woman true, she might happen do none better."

If Jane had been a homely girl she would have got her dismissal at once after this speech, but it was impossible for John Braithwaite to help admiring and respecting her as she stood before him with head erect and kindling eyes, the indignation of pride and honor in every tone of her voice. He perceived at once the influence which such a girl would have over his son, and

he remembered too that when Antony had first entered the mill after leaving college she had saved him at some personal risk from a cruel death. He remained silent a few moments, during which Jane stood before him with a proud humility that seemed to scorn, even while it acknowledged, the social difference between them.

At length he spoke: "And so you won't marry Antony till I ask you, lass? I'll never do it, and you may tell him so."

"There's no need, sir. He knows it."

"If he writes to you, Jane, will you tell me where he is?"

"Surely, sir. There's naught underhand in Jane Wilson. I'd as lief you knew as not—but he'll never write; he's o'er-angry at me. Still the lad is dear as life to me, and if you hear first, maybe, for the sake of that day when I put my life between him and death, you'd tell me, 'He's all right, Jane.'"

"I couldn't do it, lass. How can I say it is 'all right' when it is all wrong? Jackson says you are the best worker in the mill; you will draw the same wage as he does for the future"—and without another word he left her.

And so matters had stood ever since. Antony had made no sign either to his parents or the girl he loved; and his father was getting, not sick but furious, with hope deferred. Sometimes the fear that he never

would see him again made his heart sink "as wells sink before an earthquake's shock;" and the very sight of Jane's pale pathetic face became intolerable to him. But either shame or superstition prevented him from dismissing her from his employ, and so she remained the shadow darkening the noontide of his prosperity, the Mordecai sitting in his gate.

Five years passed away; then, being again in Manchester, I called at the Braithwaite mansion. As soon as I entered the gates, I perceived a great change. The beautiful flower gardens were neglected and untidy-looking, and the house had a desolate, unhappy look. A servant told me in a few words the cause. "Mrs. Braithwaite had been dead three years and the master traveling in foreign parts ever since until six weeks ago. He was sick now, but perhaps, if I would walk in, he might choose to see me."

He not only chose to see me, but he met me eagerly. I scarcely recognized him. He had fallen quite into the "lean and slippered" stage. We talked first of his wife's death, and he spoke of her with a respect and a regret that quite amazed me. After dinner, which we took together in his room, he became more communicative and said in his old abrupt way, "Mary, I have heard nothing of Antony yet."

I looked at the changed old man with real sympathy. No grief is so hard to bear as a grief not sure; and a feeling of resentment against the proud young man made me say, "He is very stubborn."

"I made him so. It is my fault."

I could scarcely believe my ears. Not even to his Maker, had I thought him capable of admitting this. My face must have betrayed my feelings, for he added, "I have learnt some things lately, Mary, I'd better have learnt forty years ago."

"Where's Jane Wilson?" I asked after a pause.

"I do not know, Mary. You see I got so I could not bear to see her any longer and I sent her £20 and told her to go. She is in no mill round here, or I should have found her."

"Have you advertised for Antony?"

"Far and near, at home and abroad. Poor lad! poor lad! he's maybe dead."

Towards dusk a young Methodist preacher came in and remained all the evening, and I saw he was trying with God's help to teach the old man the things he ought to have learnt forty years ago. They spoke freely together of all the old man's trouble, and the minister made some exceedingly wise and practical suggestions as to the best course to be pursued in prosecuting the search after the lost son.

As friend with friend he spoke until just as he was leaving; then a change sudden and untranslatable came over the young kindly face. I scarcely know how to define it, only that it gave a wonderful authority to every word he uttered; as, holding the aged trembling hands in his, he said, "Remember, sir, every cross bears its own inscription; no sorrow comes by chance; and we may always, if we try, read our sin in our punishment." Mr. Braithwaite nodded a reply, and remained all the rest of the evening exceedingly thoughtful. Perhaps he was trying to spell out the inscription over his cross, and I who knew him so well, knew also what a hard lesson it was.

That night apoplexy smote him into a breathing clod. I remained by his side until he partially rallied and then I was compelled to hasten northward. Perhaps a month after I had reached my home in Glasgow, I met Jane Wilson face to face one Sunday afternoon in the Trongate. She had forgotten me, but I recognized her at once. "Jane Wilson," I said, "have you heard anything of Antony Braithwaite?"

Her grandfather had been a Scotchman and she showed it now by her cautious questions.

"And why should you want to know?"

"Because his father is dying, and there is no one he loves to care for him."

"Where is his wife?"

"Dead."

"His daughters?"

"They care nothing for him. One is in Liverpool, the other somewhere in Germany or Italy."

"He has been a cruel, hard man, but it is not for me to judge him," she said humbly.

"No, Jane, and he is greatly changed. Do you know where Antony is?"

"Yes, ma'am, he is in Glasgow. He works in Templeton's mills with me."

"Are you married to him?"

"Nay, I have kept my word, ma'am, though I claim no credit for it; for Antony only came home three months since, and he was poor and sick, and I had none to spare. Trouble of all sorts has helped me to keep the proud boast I made more than five years ago. But I'll do aught you say is right now, ma'am."

"Well then, Jane, go at once to Manchester and see the old man; your own good sense will teach you what to say. One day it will delight you to remember this duty done."

She left next morning to try and fulfill it, and I found young Braithwaite and explained everything to him. I had friends

who gave him at once suitable employment and he made his home at my house. So I heard from his own lips the story of his struggles and misfortunes. He had sailed for Canada immediately after his quarrel with his father and Jane, but there was no blessing on such a journey. Everything had gone against him. The intense cold of the first winter so frightened him that he crossed into the States and tried Chicago. Here in land speculations he had lost all his little capital. Then he had gone farther south and joined an emigrant party going to the then "debatable land" of Kansas. But nothing prospered with him: "I had to beg the money to bring me home," he said, "and when I saw Jane again I had lost all confidence in myself, and I hardly dared to hope in God."

"It would have been more impious to despair," I answered, "but how did you find Jane?"

"I knew her aunt's house in Manchester, and she told me of my mother's death and Jane's removal to Glasgow; I did think then of trying to see father, but I found out he was abroad; and so then I came to Jane. You know what she is. There is none like her."

"She ought to love you, Antony; you have suffered a great deal for her."

"No, no," he answered almost passion-

ately. "I did not do it for her. I doubt if ever I really loved her until the last few weeks. She told me, when I wanted her to run away with me, that I was not worthy of her, and that pride and anger and a desire to aggravate my father were more to me than she was. And I was angry with her then because I knew in my heart she was right. If she had married me at that time, we should both have been miserable as well as poor. I know both Jane and myself better now, and when she comes back, if she will marry me, I will do all I can to deserve her."

In a week we had a letter from Jane. Mr. Baithwaite had received her with affected reluctance but real delight. The knowledge however that his son was alive and well and within reach of his recall any day, seemed to arouse again all his sense of injustice and anger. Jane had great hopes though, and she was a real comfort to the lonely, desolate old man. Her bright handsome person and pleasant ways were like a bit of sunshiny weather in the old house. The young preacher had urged him to bring home his banished son at once, but now that he knew he was safe he could not be humble. Pride is a just vice, it never fails to punish itself; and the longing of his affection and the struggles of this self-tormentor brought him again to the

verge of the grave. Then Jane wrote, telling Antony, "if he would spare himself a life-long remorse, he must come home at once and humble himself before his father."

If mountains can be moved by faith, why not by love? When John Braithwaite knew his son waited at his hall-door, he suddenly remembered the father who saw his child "when he was yet a great way off." Ah! all things change but a parent's love! It was the same dear, tender old drama over again. The words of pardon blending with the words of confession, the mingled tears and kisses, the full forgiveness and joy of a father's heart crying out, "Rejoice with me, for my son was dead and is alive again; was lost and is found." Such sorrow and such joy are the best evidences of our divine origin, the sweetest earnest of our immortality.

The next day, Antony and Jane were married, and Antony took his place again in the house and in the counting-room. For the old man's life brightened every day. In Jane's smile and voice and cheerful housewifely ways there was virtue, and he healed rapidly. And I think he tried to use well the days added unto him. Life, which had been hitherto only an implement with which to make money, he used for nobler ends. His own pleasure and profit had once been to him more than

both tables of the law, but he learnt gradually that charity is the scope of all God's commands. The church and the poor felt his helping hand, his children and servants waited for his footsteps, and it became a privilege to work in his mills. I do not say this was all done at once, but, evil is like a nightmare—stir under it and its power is broken; and the experience of repeated victories taught him the truth of the old adage, "Away goes the devil when the door is shut against him." God spared him to see his children's children. Before he died there was another John Braithwaite and a still fairer Jane. I think it was his sixty-third birthday and it fell on a Saturday. He went down to the mills and dismissed all the hands for a holiday, giving to each person a golden sovereign. That day there was not a happier or more popular man in all that city of thousands. "I have made five hundred hearts happy, Jane," he said, when he came home. No one noticed any change in him, he rambled in the gardens with the children and took his usual evening drive with Jane. But while they were sitting talking after dinner, he said suddenly, "Antony! Jane! I have lost my sight, I don't see you." Then he became heavy, and they laid him down among the cushions of his sofa. No one knew just when the change came, but when

the morning broke, "the week-day man had put on the garments of eternal Sabbath."

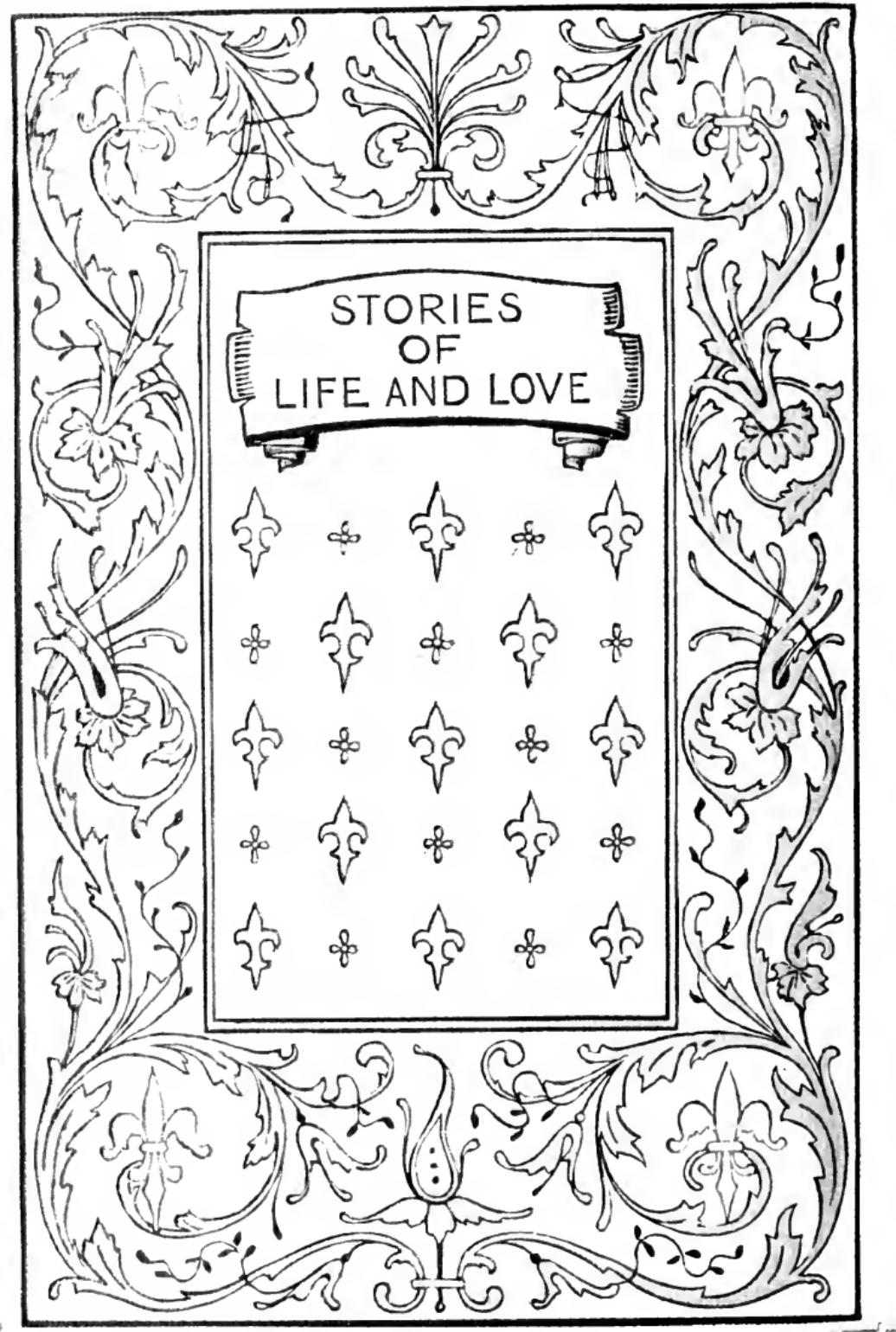
"Nothing was there for tears, nothing to wail  
Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,  
Dispraise or blame, nothing but well and fair,  
And what may quiet us in death so calm."











STORIES  
OF  
LIFE AND LOVE

